

22a REV

This is the 13th of January, 2006, Friday. Is this Friday the 13th? Well, see I made it through the whole day and didn't even make that connection. We continue tonight our study in the book of Revelation.

We're picking up in chapter 17 where you have the Scarlet Woman and the Scarlet Beast. We have not exhausted all of the things that can be learned from an analysis of that chapter. So we'll pick up there and move forward.

But let's take a moment as is our custom to recognize our function as priests and the opportunity to seek the ministry of God's Holy Spirit as we look together at God's Word. Shall we pray? Father, we are grateful for the nation in which we live. We're grateful for our freedom and the opportunities that are ours as believers not only to pursue our lives and our livelihoods and our enjoyment of family and friends in relative peace and security, but most importantly to pursue our spiritual priorities and to live our lives before you in anticipation of the ages which are to come.

We thank you for the information you have given us in your Word. We thank you for those faithful men who have studied it and have explained and interpreted and left us a heritage of good teaching and sound tradition. We thank you for those who have made it possible for us to have the Scriptures in our own language, in many cases at the cost of their lives.

We pray that we can avail ourselves of all of these resources and grow in grace and knowledge of the Savior through our study this evening. We ask it in Jesus' name, Amen. As I said, we pick up in Revelation chapter 17.

Now, we've looked at the seals, seven seals, human perspective on the judgments of God in the last half. Remember, if you're going to be pedantic about the 70th week of Daniel, the tribulation is just the last half. Technically speaking, the great tribulation is the last three and a half years.

We loosely say the tribulation to talk about the whole seven, but it's the last half where you have the seals, the trumpets, and then the bulls. Seals give a human perspective, trumpets an angelic perspective, and the bulls that we looked at in chapter 16, God's perspective. God is looking for a change of mind.

He knows ahead of time that they're not going to change their mind, but He nevertheless gives them the opportunity. And this goes all the way back to the plagues in Egypt. You had three sets of three plagues there.

Here you have three sets of seven plagues presented in Scripture. These actually overlap, and they are essentially the same events, the same unfolding looked at from

three different perspectives. But then, following that, with the earth shaking and so on, one of the seven angels, one of the seven bull angels comes back and says, Come, I will show you the judgment of the great harlot.

Now, which of these bull angels would it be? I think it's number seven. Go back to chapter 16, verse 12. The sixth angel poured out his bull on the great river Euphrates.

It's dried up the way the king's has prepared, unclean spirits like frogs getting ready for Armageddon. Then, in verse 17, the seventh angel pours out his bull into the air, and a loud voice came out of the temple of heaven from the throne, saying, It is done. There are noises and thunders and lightnings, and there is a great earthquake.

Such a mighty, and you remember the noises there, phonet, can be voices, depending on the context. Great earthquake has not occurred since men were on the earth. Now, the great city was divided into three parts.

The cities of the nations fell, and great Babylon was remembered before God to give her the cup of the wine of the fierceness of His wrath. The judgment on Babylon is contained in this seventh cup. Every island fled away.

The mountains were not found. Great hail from heaven fell upon men. How can the islands flee away and the mountains not be found? We talked about this great Japanese word that starts with tsu and ends with nami.

That's how you lose all of your islands and mountains and so on because of these huge cataclysmic floods, which there are documentaries on. Everybody's starting to be tsunami aware now. The possibility of one on the Atlantic coast of the United States because of stuff where over in the Canary Islands or someplace and somewhere on the West Coast, as has happened historically, archaeologists and people who dig through the rocks have found evidence that there have been these great things on the West Coast and Japan and so on.

And that's coming again. The Bible, long before there were any seismologists, long before there was anybody doing research on this kind of thing, foretold exactly how these would devastate human civilization. So then I think this seventh bowl angel comes over after he pours out his bowl.

And remember, this is a vision for John. This is not the actuality. And it's a play-acting sort of thing from his perspective.

There's no way John could just sit there in a helicopter and watch seven years of history unfold on planet Earth. It has to be given to him in symbolic terms so that it's memorable, communicable, and in a reasonable package. He wouldn't be able to look down and understand technology and cars and things like that.

So it's all in this symbolic form. And when you're communicating in this symbolic language, these are like extended analogies. And so once you've given an analogy, well, you can back up and address the same point in a different way.

So we have the seals analogies. We have the trumpets analogies. We have the bowls analogies.

And now this angel who has enacted this pouring out of the seventh bowl comes back and says, Look, John, I will show you the judgment of the great harlot who sits on many waters. Going to go back and expand that seventh bowl and the judgment on Babylon. Great Babylon remembered before God to give her the cup of the wine of the fierceness of his wrath.

And this has a lot of ironic value because she's the woman sitting on the beast with a cup in her hand making people drink all of these abominations and fornications. And she's making everybody else drink her cup. And God says, Go give her my cup.

And she'll drink out of my cup. And so this is retribution. Now, we talked last time about the identity of this woman who has the title, it's a mystery, Babylon, the great, the mother of harlots and the abomination of the earth.

And we saw a strong semblance of Catholicism, didn't we, last time? Sitting on seven hills, adornment, the chalice, all of the characteristics are very similar. However, and taking nothing away from that, that does not exhaust the symbolism here. Let's take a look at why.

First of all, Now, she's sitting on the beast with seven heads and ten horns. She's not sitting on the last incarnation of the beast. She's sitting on the whole thing.

All seven heads are represented. Now, God could have communicated this a different way and said, behold, she sat on the beast that came up out of the sea or behold, she was the beast that came up out of the land. This is the beast with the seven heads and the ten horns.

And remember, those seven heads represent the great empires of history. Do you remember what they are? Do you remember what the seven are? What was the first one? Think Moses. Egypt.

Then Assyria. That's Isaiah and Hezekiah. Assyria coming down, Northern Kingdom goes out.

Judah escapes by the skin of its teeth only to go out later under the third, which is Babylon. Then Medo-Persia. Then Greece.

Then Rome. And that's the, in Daniel's interpretation of Nebuchadnezzar's vision, you

just have those last four where you have the head of gold, which is Babylon, then the shoulders and arms of silver and the belly and thighs of brass and then the legs of iron. And then that last kingdom, the seventh kingdom, is that iron mixed with clay that's like the iron legs, but it's got this brittle ceramic mixed with it.

And that ability to break, unlike the iron, is what's going to ultimately cause the whole thing to topple. But notice those feet. I mean, it's interesting.

God could have used any different kind of symbol for the kingdom of the Antichrist, but He has it as the feet of iron mixed with clay. How many toes on the feet? Ten toes. How many horns on the last head of the beast? Ten horns.

Ten toes, ten horns. You've got this ten-king confederation, ten kings that have not received a kingdom. There are rulers, but none of them has a great rule.

And they are going to give their power to the beast and he's going to rule all of their little territories and they'll be sort of underlings. Well, here's the point. The woman rides the beast that represents all of these kingdoms.

It would not be inconsistent to have this woman sitting on the shoulders of that image that Nebuchadnezzar saw. In other words, the whole thing is in view. Now, Catholic Church, when did it come into being? You could argue that it's in its incipient form, you know, the early church fathers and so on, but you get down to the Council of Nicaea and the councils where they began creedalism and they began having popes and all that in the 4th century.

You could say, well, the Catholic Church really got its big launch around the time of Constantine when he said this is the official religion of the Roman Empire and that's when you had the popes having political power instead of just spiritual authority in the view of those who were subscribing to them. So, let's just say 4th century. We'll say circa 300 A.D. or 300 C.E. If you listen to the people who don't like to say Anno Domini because it's the year of our Lord, they say, well, we don't want to use B.C. before Christ and A.D. Anno Domini.

I just tell you this in case you read an article or something and it gives a date and it says some date B.C.E. or C.E. It's before the Common Era and then after Christ is the Common Era, C.E. I saw somebody say A.C.E. the other day. We're still in the Common Era. After A.C.E. will be the Millennium.

That will be after the Common Era. We're not in the after Common Era yet. It's B.C.E. and C.E. So, circa that time.

Well, how many incarnations of the beast, how many of the heads of the beast have existed since 300 A.D.? Zero. They were all before that. So, how could the woman be riding the beast with the seven heads if all the heads have died, so to speak? It doesn't

really work.

So, let me suggest to you a couple of things. Just keep that thought for a moment and let's look at something else. Remember the title, the big sign.

You see it in your text there. Set off in capital letters, centered in the middle of the page. Mystery.

Remember, mystery should be colon. This is the mystery. And then the title begins Babylon the Great.

What does it say? The Mother of Harlots. Now, I understand her committing fornication with the kings of the earth and all the rest of it. But how is she the Mother of Harlots? The Mother of Harlots.

What does that mean? It means that whatever this woman represents has had offspring. They're in her image and after her likeness, so to speak. And that there are many Mother of Harlots.

Why would it say Mother of Harlots? Why wouldn't it just say the Big Harlot? But it's Mother of Harlots. It has spawned many offspring that are just like her in terms of effect and morality and giving cups of abominations to people and so on. So, what I would like to suggest to you is that yes, everything we've said about the woman and a strong correspondence to the Roman Catholic Church in particular is valid.

But what is the Roman Catholic Church in its fundamental essential nature? It is false religion. And the woman represents false religion. There is only one kind of genuine worship and that is faith in the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.

In the Old Testament, you trust him and his plan and provision for salvation. In retrospect, in the church age, we look back and we come to him through the Lord Jesus Christ. But that is true worship.

Everything else is false. And everything else is represented by this woman. This, I think, is helpful because why does her head say Babylon? What was the pinnacle in the ancient world of false religion replacing... Now, you can say, well, you had Egypt.

Why doesn't it say Egypt or Ramses or something up on there? Or why doesn't it say Nineveh for Assyria? But think about Babylon. What is the first time where you have a world empire forcing Jewish people to conform? The Egyptians worshipped the Egyptian gods, but they never tried to make the Hebrews worship the Egyptian gods. They thought they were lower than dirt and they didn't have any business worshipping anything.

Just stamp the mud into bricks and get busy there. Assyria was a great military power

that God used as a scourge nation to take out the ten northern tribes. But Assyria didn't come in and say, worship our gods or else.

When did that take place for the first time? Babylon. Image of gold. Fiery furnace.

Lion's den. Later on with the Medes and the Persians. But the first time is Babylon.

And that's why you have Hananiah, Mishael and Azariah going into the fiery furnace. And the previous incarnation of Babylon, Babel, the Tower of Babel, was men getting together in league against God. It was a ziggurat with orientation to the stars and the signs of the zodiac and all the rest of it.

So this is the connotation. This is why it's called Babylon, I think. Because it represents false religion in general.

Remember, she is sitting on the Scarlet Beast, adorned with gold and precious stones and so on. And remember, she is the great harlot who sits on many waters. Who sits on many waters.

What do the many waters represent? It's the hoi polloi. It's the chaotic forces of darkness. It's all the Gentile nations out there.

The uncircumcised in the eyes of the Jews, right? And she sits on many. Not just on the Catholics. But down through history and all of the various incarnations of this beast with his power, his human government.

You have religion. And think about it. Go back through time and all the great empires of the world.

And you have the seers and the astrologers and the wise men who are the religious types. And we're going to go to the oracle. We're going to bring you.

We're going to read the pigeon's liver and the chicken gizzard. We're going to read the tea leaves and tell you what you ought to do. And this religious influence on government.

This is the woman riding the beast. And that is interesting because for a long time, all the way up until, say, the last decade or so, everybody thought, look at those mean old Catholics. When the Antichrist comes, it's going to be the church minus the true saints that is going to be this religious entity that's going to be this big factor in the last seven years, during the time of the Antichrist.

But, suppose it is in fact religion, but it's not Catholicism. What religion would you pick out of the dominating religions that are currently taking over Europe, taking over the Middle East, taking over Indonesia, taking over the United States? What is the religion that has had the most explosive growth in the last 50 years of any religion in the history

of keeping track? It's Islam. And this woman representing false religion, religion that empowers the few at the expense of the many, that forces people to compromise morality, that forces people to compromise justice, that forces people to drink the cup of abomination and so on, does not have to be Rome.

Remember we talked about, well, but what about Rome as the city that sits on seven hills? If you read this chapter carefully, it explains what those seven hills are, doesn't it? If you skip down here to verse 9 of chapter 17, here is the mind which has wisdom. Here is the smart brain. The seven heads are seven mountains on which the woman sits.

And we say, oh well, Rome is sitting on seven hills. But, there are also seven kings. And these mountains correspond to the heads.

There have been these seven mountaintop empires. And this is another way of talking about the kings or kingdoms. Either way.

The seven heads are seven mountains on which the woman sits. There are also seven kings or seven kingdoms. And so, rather than a geographical reference to the city of Rome per se, and this is probably, by the way, how the original recipients might have taken this, they would have seen Rome as a seat of religious power.

But what kind of religion? Well, the original, remember Domitian is the Roman emperor. And what do the Roman emperors claim for themselves? Deity. And so, in fact, it's interesting because if you go back to Julius Caesar move forward, there had been, you know, it says five have been, one is, and one is about to be.

Well, that's how many Roman emperors there had been in John's time. And so, there was a resonance there where they would have said, ah, this is Rome, but not the Rome that we look at in terms of the church, the Roman Catholic church. They would have taken this as Rome in the sense of Caesar worship.

So, I think all of those are true in the sense that whatever the current incarnation of false religion is, that's what you have to watch for. It has reared its ugly head in history seven times in league with world dominating governmental or empirical type of power. And that's what you have to watch for.

And I think that the church age being the mystery age and the Roman Catholic church having most of its dominance, you know, it really isn't near what it has been in centuries past today. Where is its real power now? It's in the past, it's history, it's kind of like the British Empire, you know. It used to be the sun never set on the British Empire, now the sun hardly ever rises on the British Empire.

But what is the current incarnation of false religion? What is the one that is taking everything over? And if you could imagine the 70th week of Daniel coming up here pretty quick, what religion do you think would be in league with a worldwide dominating

government? It would be the most prevalent religion, which at this point is Islam. So, anyway, point to ponder. Rather than limiting the woman to just a single religion, look at her as all false religion.

She sits on many waters. She has ridden this beast through all seven hills, all seven heads, and it will still be the case. And it will be the case that toward the end, these kings are going to reach around and destroy her.

This is going to be the ultimate spitting out. And you see this all over the place today, where atheists and agnostics and a lot of philosophers and different wags that talk about this, they're all saying we need to get rid of religion. Religion is the problem.

I meant to look up the title of that book. Somebody just published a big book. I think it's on the New York Times bestseller list, talking about, you know, it's time to move out of religion and into reason.

We need to get people out of religion and into reason. Get them off of faith and get them into the scientific, you know, the postmodern world. And this is more and more prevalent thinking.

People say, you know, if you look at it, all the problems we've had in history is because some religious group or other has incited violence. So, the ten horns in verse 12, which you saw, are ten kings who have received no kingdom as yet, but they receive authority for one hour as kings with the beast. People have also, down through history, interpreted this in their current times.

Most recently, we've had people identify these with the European common market, now the European Union. But you notice we've got 20-odd countries in that thing now. Even more recently, people have identified these nations with OPEC, because they are the immediately surrounding nations around Israel.

Whatever they are, they have power in the region. And I think this could be either one. But if you look in terms of the revived Roman Empire and the area that was covered by the original Roman Empire, you would expect these kings to be in that same general realm.

Would the President of the United States be one of these kings? Maybe. Could you, you know, don't we have, how many major continents do we have on the earth now that we know that it's round and everything? You get the, you know, you get your major geopolitical, Becca's had geography, how many continents are there? Seven. Got seven seas and seven continents.

So, whatever this is, it is comprehensive. All of the powers that matter are represented by these ten kings. And they all yield their authority, such as it is.

It doesn't qualify as kingdom authority. But when they all give their authority to the Antichrist, he does have a kingdom. And it is this seventh kingdom.

Now, if you check a commentary or read something or hear somebody later on talking about this, and they get to the eighth kingdom that we talked about last time, they will say, well, this is the, the seventh kingdom was the kingdom of the ten. And when they give it to the Antichrist, then that makes it the eighth kingdom. Well, I respectfully disagree.

The seventh kingdom is the feet of iron mixed with clay. Daniel shows it there as, you know, two had already gone before. And then you have the ones represented in Nebuchadnezzar's vision.

And any eighth kingdom you want to talk about has to come after that seventh kingdom. It says these ten don't have a kingdom. So, how can that be number seven? But I think people have not thought about the release of Satan and that eighth great final rebellion that takes place at the end of the millennial kingdom.

And which is the complete resolution of all of human history. Okay, well, that brings us pretty much up to where we are here in chapter 18. Just finishing the last few verses of 17.

Verse 15 says, He said to me, the waters which you saw where the harlot sits are peoples, multitudes, nations, and tongues. Once again, you could argue that, well, the Catholics have done this, but that's church age. This peoples and nations and tongues and all of these seven kingdoms, you have to look, this woman has been riding the beast all down through history.

The ten horns which you saw on the beast, these will hate the harlot, make her desolate and naked, eat her flesh and burn her with fire. And you can easily imagine that the wealth that has been taken in by many of these different religions, there's huge wealth in the Catholic Church, in the mosques, and in Buddhist temples, and the major religions of the world have got great wealth. And if those get cracked open, it's kind of like when we went after Al-Qaeda and we went to the banks and got their funds.

Well, if government all gets together and says, any bank account that's in the name of a religion, we're nationalizing that thing. We're empiricizing that thing. It's ours now.

Well, they will have eaten the flesh and they can burn the cathedrals and mosques and temples and things with fire. But you get the idea that this is going to seem like a great idea. Christians are gone, let's get rid of the rest of these religions and we can really have some peace.

So, she'll be desolate and naked. God has put it into their hearts to fulfill his purpose, to be of one mind and to give their kingdom to the beast until the words of God are fulfilled.

And their kingdom, I think, is the seventh kingdom.

It is the kingdom of the beast. It doesn't become a kingdom until each of the ten gives him what they've got. The woman whom you saw is that great city which reigns over the kings of the earth.

That great city which reigns over the kings of the earth. Now, having said that the woman who rides the beast represents false religion all down through history and can sort of take the shape of whichever one is dominant at the time. With that information, let's revisit our thoughts about the great city.

What city is the most holy city to the most number of religions on the planet? Jerusalem. It is the holiest city for Christians or even pseudo-Christians. It's the holy city for Islam, although they like Mecca, but at the rate people are getting trampled, they may have to start relisting their cities.

How many people did they finally decide to get killed in that little hodge thing? Between 300 and 400? A suitcase fell off of a bus and all these people that had to get across the bridge and throw rocks at Satan in a certain amount of time tripped over it and then people got trampled and killed. Many years ago, there were 1,400 and something people got killed in a similar incident because they had this little bridge they had to cross, they got these two rock pillars, and we saw that on the documentary where they have to take a rock and they're throwing it at Satan or something. Well, they all had to get this done as a part of their pilgrimage in a certain amount of time, so they built extra ramps and they gave extra time, but still there's a big milling throng there and if anything goes wrong, they just get trampled.

But those people value Jerusalem. You've got the Dome of the Rock there. Of course, false Judaism is centered in Jerusalem and so you've got the three major world religions right now focused on that city.

The woman whom you saw is that great city which reigns over the kings of the earth. So, now let's see how things hold up when we go into chapter 18. After these things I saw another angel coming down from heaven having great authority and the earth was illuminated with his glory.

And he cried mightily with a loud voice saying, Babylon the great is fallen, is fallen, and has become a dwelling place of demons, a prison for every foul spirit and a cage for every unclean and hated bird. For all the nations have drunk of the wine of the wrath of her fornication. The kings of the earth have committed fornication with her and the merchants of the earth have become rich through the abundance of her luxury.

So, what are we talking about here? Now we're getting more description of this Babylon which is represented by the woman who rides the beast. We are tentatively viewing this

woman as false religion in every age. And it says that once Babylon the great is fallen, it's also compared to a city.

And you think, well, you know, religion is ubiquitous. It's all over the place. So, how can you boil it down to a city? Furthermore, when it falls, it becomes a dwelling place of demons, a prison for every foul spirit and a cage for every unclean and hated bird.

For all the nations have drunk of the wine of the wrath of her fornication. The kings of the earth have committed fornication with her and the merchants of the earth have become rich through the abundance of her luxury. Once again, think about history.

Think about the money that has been made in all different religions. Iconography, how many crucifixes you think have been sold? How many holy books? How many indulgences? And how many candles? Again, we tend to think in terms of what our experience is with false religion. But if you go to Greece, you go to Athens, and you go up and down the streets and the little trinket shops there, all of these little talismans and things that have been dug out of the earth, the real ones and the reproduction ones and all of these very gross and vile and explicit little statuettes and things.

Well, these were stock and trade. Remember in Acts, when they started preaching Christianity and it got them upset because the silversmiths and the coppersmiths were losing their business because nobody was buying idols anymore. False religion, all down through history, has made its money duping the public out of their hard-earned cash.

So the merchants of the earth have become rich. Now, here's my question. And you can help me think about this.

History is long. There's thousands of years of history where this has been going on. These empires stretch all the way back to, you know, Egypt came on the rise in 2000 BC.

So we've got, you know, 6,000 years of history we can look at here. 4,000 years of recorded history that's meaningful to us. 2,000 years before Christ.

2,000 years after Christ. And when you look at the end-time judgments, there's a relatively tiny minority of people like ants crawling around the planet. And God pours out all these bowls of wrath and all of this judgment comes upon them.

You think, well, no matter what He does to these people, what about, you know, Pope Umptyscratch back there putting all the Protestants to the stake and burning them? And what about all of these heinous, grievous, horrible crimes that have been done in the name of false religion of every description all down through history? And it seems like God's taken all of His wrath out on this unlucky few who happen to be alive at the last half of the 70th week of Daniel. I mean, I'm sure this has probably occurred to you, but doesn't it seem like, you know, these little representative few are just getting the wrath of God poured out on them and all the rest of them sort of escaped unscathed, as it

were, because they died and some of these people never came to justice. You look at the horrible things that go on in the world today.

People, you know, crazy women that are killing their kids in various ways, drowning them or beating them to death and all these horrible things you see in the news. And you think, where is the justice? Is there a God in heaven? And even if He waits all over a generation of people at the end of history, what about all these people that lived and died and did all this terrible stuff? Well, think about this. In the ancient world, in the days of Israel, God illustrated through the nation of Israel His attitudes.

He said, if you find a homosexual in the camp of Israel, take him out and stone him to death, because it's an abomination. If you find a rebellious teenager who will not listen to his parents, take him out in the midst of the camp and stone him until he's dead, because it's an abomination. If you find the daughter of a priest who goes out and has illicit relations, burn her with fire, because that's an abomination.

You have these pretty grievous punishments in Israel. Now, how many teenagers actually got stoned to death? How many homosexuals actually got heaped under a pile of rocks? We don't have any record in the Bible of anybody being stoned to death for being a homosexual. We have no record in the Bible of any teenager being stoned to death for being incorrigible.

But that was the law of God that was expressed in those times. And it was designed to communicate God's attitude and the severity of God's judgment on those attitudes and those actions, right? And it was expressed, the Canaanite cultures and civilizations that were judged by Israel. Now, there had been Canaanites there for hundreds of years.

And it was only one generation that got judged when Joshua came in and started hacking and slashing with the sword. What about their grandparents and great-grandparents and great-greats going back for hundreds of years that had been doing the same heinous, awful, abominable, Molech worshipping, Baal worshipping, temple prostituting, gross stuff. And they lived and died and Joshua didn't come in and hack their heads off.

The picture that we have in the Bible of Israel coming and purging the land is a picture of God's attitude toward every single individual, every single culture that has ever done that, right? So, what does it tell us? This is the judgment that is going to come upon all such people. It doesn't always happen in this life. It doesn't always happen historically.

God does not... I mean, lightning would... It would just be a constant electrical storm if God struck people who deserve it at the time that they deserve it. I mean, then human life would be nothing but a lot of charred carbon remnants on the planet. I mean, none of us would be left, right? God defers and delays that judgment looking for change of mind, but He expresses His attitude in these really representative and symbolic judgments through history.

This judgment in Revelation chapter 17 and in Revelation chapter 18 is future, but it is nevertheless symbolic. Now, by symbolic, I don't mean that it's not real or that it isn't important, but it is an example. It is an example in time of what God is going to do for everyone at the judgment.

When I was a Marine Corps officer, I had to write fitness reports, as all military officers do, on people who work for me. And those fitness reports... And for enlisted, you have proficiency in conduct marks, what we call pro-con marks. You have to write those.

And those are very determinative. It can determine whether or not you get promoted, which changes your pay and changes your career. And it's hugely important to your future, whether you're enlisted or whether you're an officer, what kind of ratings you get.

So I would be sitting there writing these. And as a captain, I would write them on lieutenants and I would write them on my senior NCOs and staff NCOs. And if I say, well, this guy has got all the leadership qualities of a mop in the corner, I can scuttle that guy's career forever because he's got one bad fitness report and somebody else has zero.

So if I'm going to write that, if I'm going to put that judgment on that individual and affect his future in a dramatic way, there's two different ways I can do it. I can just watch him and make mental notes or make notes someplace. And then when fitness report time comes around, I can write him up and call him in and say, well, Sergeant Jones, I've marked you down on appearance.

I've marked you down on leadership. I've marked you down on proficiency in your military occupational specialty. And he'd say, well, I had no idea.

But how, why didn't you say something? And that's a terrible thing to be brought in and have this rating for a whole period, six months or a year, and you don't find out about it until it's too late. It's graven in stone and it's all done. The good officer, the good supervisor will tell someone all along the way, now look, I just want you to know that in my evaluation, I see you as being weak on timeliness.

Your personal appearance isn't up to snuff. Your organizational abilities need some work. I need to see some progress here before I rate you or I'm going to have to mark you down in this area.

And you tell them beforehand and you tell them along the way, this is where I see you in the scheme of things. You're following last in the pack in terms of this particular area. Now when it comes time to call the person and say, here's the fitness report I have sent in on you.

Here's the pro-con marks I have given you. There's no surprise. You've told them all along, right? That's what God is doing here.

That's what God does in the Old Testament. People say, why the God of the Old Testament? Why is he so mean and cruel and chopping people up and raising their cities to the ground and killing women and children and all that? This is God's warning. God is saying, look, you see the kind of behavior these people are engaging in? This is the kind of judgment that is coming on every single individual who has this attitude, every single individual who does these actions.

This is my divine attitude and this is the kind of divine judgment that's coming. Every single person. I'm making an example out of these people to warn you.

This is a future example of the very same thing. It's not just the 70th week of Daniel generation that is going to have these bold judgments and trumpet judgments and seal judgments poured out on them. These are just the exemplars.

These are the ones that are going to see their judgment poured out in time so that it can be viewed by the millennial civilization. Why does it happen right before Jesus' kingdom instead of after? Because when Jesus comes down and rules with a rod of iron, as somebody starts getting unruly, He's going to say, you remember 200 years ago? You remember that seven year period? You remember the radioactive nuclear waste that was the earth when I started this kingdom? That's what's going to happen to you if you don't straighten up and fly right. So, think about that.

This is God's judgment on all false religion, on all personal greed, on all perversion and distortion and self-interest at the expense of worship and honor of God. Nobody escapes this judgment. I don't care when you lived or when you died.

This is the judgment that's coming on every single individual. These people in Revelation, these people in the Old Testament are merely exemplars. No one gets a get out of jail free card.

That phrase doesn't even occur in the Bible. Okay, well let's pause here and take our break. When we come back, we'll pick up in chapter 18.