

Revelation 20-06-04a

This is June the 4th, 2020. We continue tonight, this Thursday night, our study in the book of Revelation. We're taking something of an overview approach rather than our normal verse-by-verse, chapter-by-chapter, straight shot through the book because we are highlighting the things pertaining specifically to the church.

Much of the material, while vital, while useful, applicable in terms of its exemplary observation interpretation value, nevertheless, is specifically designed to inform and encourage those saints who will go through that time. And we're interested in this particular study in the things that inform us in our day, in our time right now, and are more directly related to our own experience, which is also material included in this book. So we're hitting that as a highlight.

And depending on how I observe our progress and coverage in that, we'll see how much more of the book we cover. But right now I have my hands full getting through this part, as you can tell by the length and duration of our allegedly quick study. But we're going to be picking up tonight in the vicinity of Revelation chapter 18.

So your Bible may start to develop a crease in the chapter 17, 18 arena, looking at the scarlet harlot, the mystery Babylon sitting on the seven mountains, beast, seven heads, 10 horns, etc. This is pertinent to us because, although you may not know it, you're in it. You are in, you are immersed in, you are contained within this scarlet harlot.

So that's kind of important to know, be helpful to figure out what we should do as a result of that knowledge. So that's where we're going to be picking up tonight. We will also be in the book of Daniel.

We need to use Daniel as the key to unlock some of these truths and observations. So we're, without really wanting to, currently in quite the prophetic mode. But these are days where the prophetic mode is necessary.

You look around at current events and see that the circumstances are escalating in a very unique and unprecedented way. Let's take a moment to dedicate our time, our fellowship, our study, to the glory of the Lord Jesus Christ, ask God's blessing on us, and then we'll get started. Father, we are so privileged to not only have been rescued and delivered from a hopeless condition, from the corruption and inevitable judgment upon sin and our sins, but to have been uniquely entered into the body of Christ to be a part of your unique gift to him as a result of his victorious conquest of sin and Satan at the cross.

We are grateful to live in this age and to be heir to the unique promises and encouragements found in your word for our times. We pray that as we look at these things together that God the Holy Spirit will teach us, encourage us, strengthen our hearts, amplify the peace that is our gift from the Lord Jesus Christ, so that even as we see times of change, times of decision, times of

challenge and opportunity, we will also find ourselves resting more and more securely in your all-powerful hands. We pray that you will bless our study tonight to each heart.

May we gain strength for the journey and shine brightly as lights in the midst of our generation. We pray these things in Jesus' name. Amen.

If you have turned to the latter chapters of the Revelation, we want to pick up tonight, as I said, in Revelation chapter 18. This is in the midst of the description of the Scarlet Woman and the Scarlet Beast. We have already looked at chapter 17 and have seen, hopefully with understanding, what the interpretation is.

If you pick up in chapter 17, verse 9, here is the mind which has wisdom. I would like that to be me. I would like that to be you.

I would like that to be we and us, that we are minds with wisdom, biblical wisdom, spiritual understanding. Seven heads are seven mountains on which the woman sits. There is only one town for which this literally applies in history.

It's well known. It's a signature feature. It is Rome, Italy, the Rome of the ancient world, the Rome of today.

Why is it used here? This is sort of a symbol of a symbol. The beast and the woman riding upon it and the seven heads are seven mountains. You move from this visionary beast to the city and the city itself also stands for something.

We're in a double-hop mode here. There may be things wrong, but there's nothing particularly or uniquely evil about the city of Rome. It's a city like many other cities.

It's very ancient, but there are ancient cities. It's not the city itself. It's not the fact that it sits on seven hills.

Rome stands for something in the same way that Babylon stands for something. We get from the vision which allows a picture of action and change, dominance and submission and ultimately rebellion and destruction. The picture isn't going to do too well if you've got a city.

The city can't reach around and bite something. The city can't drink a cup. You need a different symbol.

We have two different symbols, one tied to the other, in this scarlet harlot. The fact that she sits on these seven hills means that she is Rome, but Rome and the woman as Rome also stand for something larger. We saw in verse five earlier in that chapter on her forehead is written mystery, and the comma is essential there.

It's not mystery Babylon. It's mystery on one line. Babylon is sort of on the next line.

Mystery, Babylon the great, mother of harlots, mother of the abominations of the earth. Now, what is the unique or definitional nature of a harlot? A harlot is a woman for our purposes. What is the normal status of women relative to men? Ideally, in God's program, in God's plan and purpose, a woman marries a man.

She is a daughter to her father until she is given in marriage, and then the husband leaves his father and mother and cleaves to his wife, and they two become one flesh. That's the model. Plenty of exceptions.

Nothing wrong with being single, having other status, but this is just for instructional purposes. This is the model, right? So here is this woman, and she is not a married woman. She is instead a prostitute.

She has chosen, instead of following the proper path, the godly path, the model that God has ordained as the very heart and center and foundation of divine institutions of marriage and family and nation, she has chosen her own path. She has decided, I will do with my body what I want to do. I will rent it out and sell it to any number of men for my own gratification, for my own purposes.

I reject the divine order. A harlot rejects the divine order and decides, for whatever reason, be it economic, be it, you know, people say, oh, I need money. It's the only way I can get it.

I don't care what the rationale is. It's some objective the person puts higher than fidelity to God. If you're godly and you are faithful unto death, then you're not going to become ungodly to sustain yourself.

You rely on God. So this is providing for oneself for whatever reason. That's what a harlot is.

This is a harlot who has put herself ahead of the plan, program, purpose, provision, and structures that God has ordained, right? It's going your own way. It is not just a sin of the high hand. It is a lifestyle of the high hand.

Overt rebellion, shaking your fist in God's face, saying, I don't have to get married. I don't have to wait for a man. I don't have to be anything other than what I want to be.

So it very much partakes of hubris, of arrogance, of the strutting sort of attitude you can see in your television as recently as these past days and weeks. So harlot, honor forehead, mystery, honor forehead, mystery from the days of John forward, the days of the apostle Paul forward. There are many mysteries in the word of God, but the mystery is the church.

It was a mystery in the old Testament age. It was revealed. Paul is the apostle who is the steward of the mystery.

And this is God's expansion and incorporation of salvation into all nations, not just Israel. No

longer are the chosen people hereditary or proselytized Israelites. Now it is widened and open to all.

That's the mystery that Jews and Gentiles are now one in Christ. It is the body of Christ. That's the mystery.

No such idea ever shows up in old Testament scripture that there's going to be a savior and his body is going to be comprised of believers, Jew and Gentile, slave and free, male and female, et cetera. Right? So this woman has that name on her forehead. She is identified as Rome.

So she is labeled church. She is associated with the city that has hosted what purports to be the headquarters, capital and ruling entity of the church for many centuries now. So it's not hard to figure out what she actually represents this.

If you, if you read a J. Dwight Pentecost book, things to come, and in your reference library, I occasionally suggest books that you would do well to have on your shelf, things to come, J. Dwight Pentecost, you need that book. And it's an easy read. It's well organized.

It's cohesive. It's cogent. It's concise.

I would particularly commend to your attention because I thought about covering it and I'm not going to. Dr. Pentecost covers this as well as it can be covered. The pre-tribulation rapture, he covers the post-trib view.

He covers the mid-trib view. You might be tempted to think, well, but could, could we maybe go into the first part of it? There was an overlap between the end of the age of Israel and the beginning of the age of the church, some 40 years between the ascension of Christ and the destruction of Jerusalem. And, you know, Paul runs into people that only had the baptism of John.

They were Old Testament saints. And when they hear the message of Christ, they get the ghost, so to speak, and, and, uh, jump, jump the fence. But you had an overlap.

You say, well, maybe there's going to be an overlap at the end. And you might be tempted to think, oh, we're, we're, uh, maybe we're going to go into the, at least the first part of that. Maybe it's the mid-trib rapture position and, and, uh, the time of false peace and the covenant with the antichrist.

And then in the middle of the week, he breaks it. Then there's the rapture and maybe the two witnesses when they are raised up the third day and, and are called to heaven, maybe that's when the church goes and so on. Well, uh, that's understandable.

I have gone and checked those ideas myself to see if maybe I missed something or, you know, you don't want to just be a victim of your training. I will tell you conclusively, forcefully,

unequivocally, mid-trib, mid-trib rapture does not work. And all you need to know is the church is not Israel.

Israel is not the church. The 70th week, all of the 70th week, all seven years, not just three and a half years are determined upon Daniel's people and upon Daniel's holy city. It's all about Israel.

And the church is not there. The church is in heaven and you see it in revelation. We've covered it before, but anyway, don't get any worries that, Oh, because Pentecost has passed in the year 2020, maybe we're going to go through three and a half years.

And then just as the antichrist really gets angry, we pop up to heaven. No, we will leave before the 70th week begins. Just, and if you want the details on that, get Dr. Pentecost book, things to come, look up the chapter on the pre-trib rapture position.

Feel free to read the mid-trib. I wouldn't waste your time on the post-trib. That's just nuts.

But, uh, if you've got any questions about not leaving until the middle, read the mid-trib and then the pre-trib sections, that book answers all questions. You will come away with no doubts in your military mind as to what the timing is. So this scarlet harlot of revelation, chapter 17, revelation, chapter 18, and into the early verses of chapter 19, this is what Dr. Pentecost calls the professing church.

Those who claim to be of Christ, who claim to be mystery, who claim to be the bride of Christ, but they are in fact, the harlot and they are Christian in name only. They are not genuine believers in Christ, but they purport to represent him on this earth. And they are vicarious, vicar meaning substitute representative, uh, of Christ without actually representing him and claiming the name without actually placing your faith in Christ is convenient.

You can accomplish a lot. There are any number of, um, musicians, businesses, and so on that put a fish or a cross on their identity and hope to win over and merchandise to the huge segment. Just look up sometime the earnings in the Christian music industry, just as one example, uh, people who buy olive wood, fill in the blank here from Israel.

Um, it's a huge business. It's a huge merchandising hundreds of millions of dollars, um, marketed into the Christian or purportedly Christian or fashionably Christian, uh, population. So this is, we've covered two of the three names here.

We know what mystery means claiming to be church, but she's a harlot. So she's not really church. This would be like claiming to be somebody's wife, but you're actually just a prostitute.

I'm, I'm your, I'm your wife. If that's your truth, I'm your wife for tonight. I'm your wife.

If you've paid me. Um, so we know what mystery means. We know what harlot means and, uh, mother of harlots notice offspring of other harlots.

Other prostitutions are sponsored, birthed and nurtured by this great harlot. What's the third name that's written on her forehead. She's a mother of harlots and abominations.

She's the mystery. What's the third name Babylon, right? Now Babylon, we say the seven Hills suggest Rome and Rome suggests false religion, religion, so-called Christian in name only a Christian because it's convenient Christian because it's profitable or it enables power. You can, you know, for centuries, uh, the Catholic church scared people to death, uh, and made them pay indulgences and all the rest of it with the threat of eternal damnation, uh, to wield over the heads of people who they wouldn't let read their own Bible.

Um, so it's, it's religion, so-called false religion, but Babylon, Babylon, in the same way that Rome is a symbol she's associated with Rome, but she's also associated with Babylon, Babylon. Where do we find out the most about Babylon? What book of the Bible? Daniel, Daniel seal up the vision until the time of the end. And you think, well, is it Daniel that is going to be unlocked in the time of the end? Or is Daniel the key to unlocking what you understand about the time of the end? Well, we need to turn back and take a look because for this Babylon, we're going to come to a little better understanding of why we are said to be you and I, as the genuine people of God are called out of Babylon.

Meaning that formerly the people of God were in Babylon in the midst intermingled, you know, the, it's kind of the reverse of the wheat and the tares. This is a little bit of wheat amidst a whole lot of tares. So turn back to Daniel chapter two, let's find out what are we to understand when this woman is labeled Babylon.

Go back to Daniel chapter two. And of course, you remember Daniel chapter one is the story of Daniel and his three friends and their dedication to God, their faithfulness to God. But just stop and think about that for a minute.

As the first chapter of Daniel unfolds, what do you have? You have Babylon as the power and you have the genuine believers in God, Daniel, Hananiah, Azariah, and Mishael as the faithful. What's inside what there? The four princes of Judah are embedded in Babylon, right? Now, if God were going to judge Babylon in chapter two, what would he do for Daniel, Hananiah, Azariah, and Mishael? Would they be judged along with it or would they be preserved? Well, you don't have to look too far because by chapter three, we're going to see pretty much that exact thing happen. You remember the fiery furnace story, right? And the fire does not harm Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, right? Well, in chapter two, you have the dream of Nebuchadnezzar and his wise men can't figure it out.

The Babylonian counselors do not get the drift of God's revelation. Put it down, the Babylonian wise men don't understand God's revelation to the king of Babylon. God has put his word and his future plan directly in front of the Babylonians and they cannot figure it out.

None of them can. False Christianity doesn't have a clue as to the actual plans, purposes, and judgments of God. Mystery Babylon in Revelation 17, 18, and the beginning of 19 doesn't have a clue as to what's coming.

Babylon. Look at chapter two when Daniel is finally called for. In verse 27, Daniel says in the presence of the king, the secret which the king has demanded the wise men, astrologers, magicians, and soothsayers cannot declare to the king.

You're never going to get divine truth out of false religion. But verse 28, there is a God in heaven who reveals secrets. Circle it.

There is a God in heaven who reveals secrets. And who does he reveal his secrets to? Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah. Even though they are captives in Babylon, Babylonians have all the power, seem to be holding all the cards.

God's truth is revealed to God's faithful people. So verse 28, there is a God in heaven who reveals secrets and he has made known to King Nebuchadnezzar what will be in the latter days through Daniel. Now he's revealed it, but Nebuchadnezzar doesn't understand it.

Notice right in the middle of that verse, he has made known to King Nebuchadnezzar what? Read it out loud. What will be in the latter days? What will be? God has revealed to Nebuchadnezzar what will be in the latter days. You say, well, now, wait a head of gold, shoulders, Medo-Persia, belly and thighs of brass, Greece, legs of iron, Rome, feet of iron and clay.

That's future yet. But those are not really latter days. Those are middle days.

The days of Babylon, Medo-Persia, Greece, Rome, those aren't latter days, are they? Daniel says God has revealed to Nebuchadnezzar Babylon, you know, I am England. The King stands for the whole empire. So he's revealed to Nebuchadnezzar, i.e. he has revealed to Babylon what will be in the latter days.

Well, Babylon is our Babylon in Revelation. So you can skip, you know this story very well, the image and the interpretation of it. Look at verse 37.

You, O King, are a king of kings. Does it remind you of anything? What's the banner on the thigh of the Lord Jesus Christ in Revelation chapter 19? King of kings and Lord of lords. But here you, O King, are a king of kings.

There is a king of kings and there is the king of kings. And as I am often pointing out as an English major, when it's an indefinite pronoun, when it's an indefinite article like this, a king, it's lower case. When it is a definite article, the king, then it's referring to Christ.

Of course, you capitalize king in our tradition. So God of heaven has given you a kingdom, power, strength, and glory. That's all you need to know out of Daniel chapter two.

God has given the earthly king of Babylon power, a kingdom, strength, and glory. These are by God's behest. So there's a message here that is given to Babylon, wherever the children of men dwell, verse 38, beast of the field, birds of the heaven, he has given them into your hand and has made you ruler over them all.

There's a responsibility for stewardship. There's a responsibility for nurture, for care from those to whom much is given, much is required. So there's a failure when you start focusing on the power and not on the responsibility.

Look at chapter two, at chapter three, rather. After Nebuchadnezzar gets this, he focuses on what he has been given. So Nebuchadnezzar the king made an image of gold whose height was 60 cubits and its width six cubits.

What he decided was, since I am the head of gold, I'm going to make the whole thing gold. I don't want to see the Medes and the Persians or whoever else is coming along enter into this. I'm going to make the whole thing gold.

So he's going to usurp the power that God says he has as the head and then is going to eventually depart from his kingdom. That's the whole story of chapter three. And of course, this becomes a form of worship of Nebuchadnezzar rather than God who gave Nebuchadnezzar his power.

So if you look down at verse seven, at the time that the people heard the sound of the horn, the flute, the harp, the lyre, and symphony with all kinds of music, all the people, nations, and languages fell down and worshiped the gold image which king Nebuchadnezzar had set up. Now without being crass about it, if you look at modern organized religion, if you look at the holy smoke that has gone on in your ritualistic worship traditions with Catholicism and its offshoots and derivatives, there's a lot of music, there is a lot of ritual and timing and looking at those who are running the show, so to speak. An issue is made of the priest, an issue is made of the music and the catechical components of it.

But just notice the same thing has happened in the modern protestant church, your big stadium churches. What do you have? The sound of the horn, the flute, the harp, the lyre, the guitar, the drum, the tambourine, the keyboard, the vocalists. There is nothing intrinsically wrong with music.

David wrote music to praise the Lord, but when it becomes the issue, when it becomes the focus, when it splits churches because, well, I want to sing this kind of music, well, I want to sing that kind of music, you're focusing on the music instead of focusing on the reason you're supposed to be coming to assemble, right? It's anything can be made wrong. Take a little wine for your stomach's sake, that's good. Be not drunk with wine wherein is excess, that's bad.

God will provide you your daily bread, your necessary food, that's good. Eating to excess is gluttony and it's a sin. Any good thing taken to excess or substituted and put out of place.

Worshipping God is good, but worshipping God at the expense of other responsibilities like your parents, your marriage, your children is bad. Jesus said you should do the one without leaving off the other. It's fine to observe the commandments of God, but don't be so observant that you transgress by your observance.

And this is where the law of love, love for God and love for one another comes into play. So skip down now to chapter three, verse 16, we're still in Daniel. So Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego answered and said to the king, oh, Nebuchadnezzar, we have no need to answer you in this matter.

When he says, you have to look at verse 15 to understand this. It's a long verse, but Nebuchadnezzar is talking to them and he says, is it true that you do not serve my gods and worship the gold image which I have set up? How many images, icons, statues, yard ornaments, Virgin Mary's, St. Francis of Assisi and all the rest of it. How many St. Christopher's, how many crucifixes and little strings of beads have have gone out in the name of Catholicism just to name one.

And I believe that Catholicism is the major target of the symbol of the woman sitting on the seven hills. Islam doesn't have its capital in Rome. Protestantism was birthed in Germany and elsewhere, not in Rome.

So it's where the Bible puts the focus. It's where I'm putting the focus. There are in fact believers who are Catholics, but the Catholic church is not a nurturing home for growing Christians.

It's just not. You can't say all Catholics are unsaved, but what you can say is the Catholic church is not the place for a growing believer to grow. You can't grow.

It's too obfuscated. It is shot through with falsehoods, with direct contradictions of scripture, and they are going to pay the price. Wars have been fought, instigated by Catholicism across the centuries.

Torture and execution has been perpetrated in the name of that church, purportedly in the name of Christ. Oppression, rape, pillage, plunder, looting. Look at what happened when the Catholics came across to the new world and savagery in the treatment of people instead of the love of Christ.

So you just can't help it. But Nebuchadnezzar says in 315, if you are ready at the time you hear the sound of the horn, flute, harp, lyre, and psaltery in symphony with all kinds of music, to fall down and worship the image which I have made. But if you do not worship, you shall be cast immediately into the midst of a burning, fiery furnace.

Who is the God who will deliver you from my hands? Well, unbeknownst to him, there actually is a God who is going to deliver them from his hands. But they answer and say, Nebuchadnezzar,

we don't even need to answer you in this matter. Verse 17, Daniel 3, our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the burning, fiery furnace, and he will deliver us from your hand, O king.

If not, we're still not going to serve your gods, and we will not worship the gold image which you have set up. Now, you know this story, and you know the outcome. God's faithful individuals are delivered sometimes through, sometimes out of judgments and persecutions.

Ultimately, the Babylonian empire is going to be destroyed and replaced. Ultimately, the Medo-Persian empire is going to be destroyed and replaced. Ultimately, the Greek empire is going to be destroyed and replaced.

Ultimately, the Roman empire is going to be destroyed and replaced. What has persisted down through all of those centuries? The existence of faithful believers, the remnant, except God had left to us a remnant, we would have ended up like Sodom and Gomorrah. But God has ensured that there is a faithful remnant all the way through.

Now, I want to suggest something fresh to you here. I'm almost out of time for the first session, so let me leave you with a thought in terms of timing based on Babylon. What do you know about the Babylonian captivity? And I'll find out what you know by asking you specific questions.

How long was the Babylonian captivity? How long were the Jews in captivity before they were allowed to return? What was the formal length? Daniel read it in the Jeremiah scroll. Jeremiah 29.10 is what he read. How long was it? Seventy years.

Question two. Why was it 70 years? Why did God decree captivity on Judah specifically for 70 years? For a long period of time, close to 500 years, children of Israel in general, and the people of Judah, where Jerusalem the capital and the temple is, had failed to observe God's calendar and observe the Sabbath year. There was supposed to be a Sabbath year every seventh year to let the land rest, to restore and renew every seven years.

And for nearly 500 years, they didn't do it. Actually, it's 490 years. Now, how many Sabbath years do you miss in a 490 year period? What's 490 divided by 70? 70.

So think about this now. Stay with me. God's people are in the land.

They have a monarchy. They have autonomy, but they are disobedient. And based on their disobedience and the length of time they were disobedient, God determined a certain period of time, a specific period of time where they would be out of their land and not autonomous.

It's a fixed period of time and it's 70 years based on Sabbaths, right? Currently, the Israelites, after 69 weeks of the 70 that are in Daniel chapter 9, they were disobedient during that time, failed to observe their jubilees and so on. And they are now out of the land for some set period of time. Would it be surprising if God chose to fix that amount of time that they are out of the land and have no autonomy, certainly no spiritual identity, based on the same kind of thing? The

Babylonian captivity was based on missing Sabbath years.

If their scattering amongst the Gentiles is based on jubilee years, then starting with the time of Christ and 40 years later, 70 AD, Jerusalem is destroyed, you could figure that the 50 year jubilees and 40 of them would be 2,000 years. Now, you could figure that 2,000 years as early as perhaps Pentecost, which we recently passed as an anniversary, seven years prior so that you have the 70th week hitting. It's more likely, especially now that Pentecost is passed, it's increasingly more likely that if that is in fact an anniversary, if that principle holds, the Babylonian captivity was set based on Sabbath years they missed, the scattering in the Gentiles would be based on jubilees they missed, that a 40 number associated with the 50 years giving you a 2,000 year scattering would find its culmination or its endpoint as early as say 2027.

If the Lord Jesus was crucified in 2027, it could conceivably be as late as 2070. If you figure that God sort of continued to observe Israel all the way until 70 AD, I personally think that that 40 year gap was to give them time to listen to the Christian message and jump the fence into Christian faith as Old Testament saints. By the end of that 40 year generation, anybody that's going to believe in Christ and or convert their Old Testament sainthood to New Testament sainthood will have done so.

Pretty much they're all going to be gone by 70. So I would think that if God chooses to use that symmetry, and he certainly doesn't have to, but it's suggestive that he that he timed, according to Jeremiah, the Babylonian captivity, and you have Babylon mentioned again in Revelation, that this would be a happy symmetry, 40 times 52,000 years, and that something might happen in and around the time of 2027. Now, not setting a date, I'm not saying, you know, use up all of your retirement by 2027 because we're all going to die.

I'm just saying that it's an interesting principle to observe that when God has shoved his people out of the land for disobedience, he did it for a set period of time, and then they returned. Well, if this is a similar set period of time, that would be kind of a suggestive period of time for them to be scattered and for Jerusalem to be trodden underfoot by the Gentiles. Suppose somebody engineers a peace agreement in the Middle East to the point that Jews gain the kind of access to the Temple Mount in Jerusalem that they want.

They've got the city, but they don't have the Mount, and in God's eyes, if you don't have the Mount, you don't have the city because the city is defined by the presence of Mount Zion. Well, right now, Jews are barely allowed to walk up there. They can't even pray under their breath on that Mount, but if the Antichrist figure at the beginning of the week establishes a covenant giving them access and restarting that clock, that would be a propitious time.

I could see that in the way God works and the symmetry that he typically uses. I'm not predicting it. I'm suggesting.

It's suggestive. It's possible. But this notion ties the Babylon of Daniel's day to the Babylon who is going to get her comeuppance in the 70th week because she will still be here.

The professing believers that are not genuine believers will not leave in the rapture, and she's going to be sitting there purporting to represent Christianity, denying that there's been a disappearance of Christians because, hey, I'm still here. I'm still riding the beast, and who knows what conditions. Can you imagine if a much worse virus strikes and there's an even greater quarantine and social distancing and nobody's allowed to leave and you've got to be tested for this new thing or a recurrence or a mutation of this one? You could easily understand that people who are not very visible anyway, everybody's behind masks, nobody knows who is who, that the rapture could take place without making much of a blip because there's too much other news.

Right now, there's such wall-to-wall coverage on the news of certain things that I think the rapture could happen today and the news media would barely notice because they're too busy watching stuff burn and glass shatter and, you know, one thing and another. So it is conceivable that that would be a propitious time. It can happen any time between now and then, so don't let your guard down.

My constant encouragement is to remember that the rapture is as close as our last heartbeat, our last breath. That's the one to really watch for. The Son of Man comes at an hour that you think not.

Watch and pray and as soon as you start thinking that's going to be a certain time, well, it's not. So I'm just saying that wouldn't it be great if we have a little bit of time left to us to really redeem the time, finish our race with a sprint to the tape, do the things that God has called us to be prepared for joining the Lord Jesus and our fellow saints in the sky and moving into that next phase. You want to be ready today.

You want to be ready tomorrow. You want to be ready any hour to be that good and faithful servant who, when his master returns, finds him doing what he was charged to do. And what is that? Represent Jesus Christ on this earth.

Be ready to give an answer to everyone who asks you a reason for your hope, not your fear, not your worry, not your doubt, not your undue concern. Nobody's going to ask you why you're nervous. Everybody's nervous.

Nobody's going to ask you a reason for your depression. Everybody's depressed. I was talking to a good friend who's had started a couple of businesses three years ago and two of the three businesses are defunct because of the combination of these two factors.

He's in a large city and between the shutdown and the rioting, his businesses are gone. And he's a believer and he's a good guy, but he's down. Well, nobody's going to ask you a reason for your hope when you're down.

And I'm not criticizing him. He's got reason and he'll recover. He's got a sense of humor.

But you don't want to be down. You want to be confident. You want to be stabilized.

You built your house on the rock. Now it's time for the storms. Just remember, your house isn't the strength.

The foundation is the strength. The foundation is what's going to keep you from blowing away. Remember the rock on which we are founded.

That rock is Christ. Nothing shakes Christ. We are in him.

Nothing shakes us. One of the arguments, if you read Pentecost and I reviewed it this week, one of his better observations in there, in my opinion, is we are in Christ. Christ has already been judged.

We're not going to be under any part of God's judgment because Christ has already been judged and we're in Christ. If any man be in Christ, he's a new creation. There is therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus.

So no part of the 70th week is going to fall on the church because we're in Christ and Christ has already been through the judgment. So no judgment on us. The only judgment that comes to us is for faithlessness and disobedience and that's on us.

That's not in Christ. But in terms of presence on the earth during the judgments of God, we will not be here. Well, I run a little over.

We're going to pause here and take our break. When we come back, we're going to return now with our fresh understanding from Daniel on Babylon to what the 18th and early 19th chapter had to say about the mystery of Babylon and her destruction and those who come out of her before that judgment. Let's pause here and we'll resume in a bit.