

Rev 26-04-12a

Good morning. Welcome to the Sunday morning services at Grace and Truth Bible Church. This is the 12th of April, 2026.

We continue our study in Revelation. We are in chapter 16. Let's ask God's blessing as we begin.

Father, thank you for this day. Thank you for blessing us, for granting us the opportunity to spend this time together, to share our enthusiasm for your word, and for the things that we can learn from it. We thank you for the preservation of your word, for the presence and power of your Holy Spirit to help us understand it.

We pray that as we look at this portion of your word and its parallels, that your spirit will minister it to our hearts in a meaningful and effective way, so that we are not merely more familiar with prophecy and the prophetic content, but with what it means to our priorities and the goals and the efforts that we undertake as those who are representing the Lord Jesus Christ on this earth. We pray it in Jesus' name. Amen.

Looking at our passage, let's begin at the beginning here in chapter 16. John says, I heard a loud voice from the temple saying to the seven angels, go and pour out the bowls of the wrath of God on the earth. Some texts say seven bowls.

There's no material difference. The first went and poured out his bowl upon the earth. A foul and loathsome sore came upon the men who had the mark of the beast and those who worshiped his image.

Then the second angel poured out his bowl on the sea, and it became blood as of a dead man, and every living creature in the sea died. Then the third angel poured out his bowl on the rivers and springs of water, and they became blood. And I heard the angel of the waters saying, you are righteous, O Lord, the one who is, who was, who is to be, because you have judged these things.

For they have shed the blood of saints and the prophets, and you have given them blood to drink, for it is their just due. And I heard another from the altar saying, even so, Lord God almighty, true and righteous are your judgments." Let's stop here at the first three bowls. We have some things to undertake.

The first three bowls, as we saw last time, parallel the first three trumpets. And the targets in particular are the same, but we saw in the trumpets that one third was immediately destroyed. Here in the bowl judgments, the devastation is total.

And the first point I would like to offer you for consideration is notice that when God throws a mountain into the sea, back in chapter 14, with the first sounding of the trumpet, you have a, I saved chapter 14, I think I've got to go back a little further than that. But when the trumpet is

blown and a great mountain is cast into the sea, I've got to go all the way back to chapter 8, if my memory serves, yes. So the first angel sounded, hail and fire followed, mingled with blood.

They were thrown to the earth. A third of the trees were burned up and all green grass was burned up. In our passage in 16, a foul and loathsome sore came upon men who had the mark of the beast and those who worship his image.

And these are the men that are upon the earth. And so you get the idea that both mankind and the environment are attacked. And the point here is from God's perspective, when he looks at us at the point of our Christian faith, we believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and we are saved.

We see the beginning of our salvation. You could think of it loosely or approximately as one third of our salvation takes place. We are freed from the power of sin.

We are granted the presence and ongoing support of the Holy Spirit. We are capable of understanding God's word and we begin. We are separated from the world.

We are separated from the power of Satan, the power of death. But our salvation is not complete. It has begun.

We progress in our salvation. We call this in theology, progressive sanctification. We learn to leave sin further and further behind.

We learn to lay hold of righteousness by faith and so on. But our salvation is a process. So many things in scripture are a process.

We've seen that the return of the Lord Jesus himself is a process. His second coming, quote unquote, begins with coming in the air to claim his saints, his church age believers, his body pictured as the bride. That is the beginning of his return.

But his return is spread across seven years. And his actions as the lamb in heaven, as it had been slain, opening the seals, superintending as the angels blow the trumpets and pour out the bowls. He sits on the cloud with a sickle and prepares to reap.

This is all a part of the culmination of this phase of God's plan and eventuates in his return, standing on the Mount of Olives to begin the millennial kingdom. But it's a process. Our salvation is a process.

And I would suggest to you that these judgments are not instantaneous. They're not momentary. They don't just take place begin and end in a few days.

This is one of the distinctions. There are so many comparisons and contrasts with the plagues in Egypt. You remember the Nile turning to blood and the frogs of ice and darkness and hail and moraine, sore boils and so on, lasted a few days and ceased.

These begin and seem to persist over a period of time. So there is a point of application in this. Looking in particular, there are wider views we could take, but let's just concentrate on the trumpets and the bowls.

They seem to be intentionally tied together, the suggestion being for us to look at them and draw conclusions that are applicable. So what can we apply now that we've seen the trumpets and we're going through these bowls? Much of what God does is a process. Creation was spread across a total of seven days, six days and then a day of rest.

God could have just said, let there be the earth and all that in it is. But it was progressive. It built on itself.

The environment is prepared. Life begins. Life gets more complex, eventuating in mankind.

So when God is at work in our lives, we often would like a quick fix, a fast answer, a resolution right here, right now. I have a headache. I want to take an NSAID and the headache will be gone really quick.

I have an insult in my body. I want to take something and fix it. There are things that need to be addressed right away, and there are times when God will intervene in a rapid fashion.

But much of what takes place in our lives is progress, process, spread over time. That in itself is an observation. But if we go a step further as a chess player, if we look beyond the first ply and the first move and say, OK, well, I understand that those who wait upon the Lord will renew their strength because it's a process, why is there a process? Looking at these judgments, why doesn't God just destroy everything as soon as he casts a mountain into the sea, as soon as he sends sores, as soon as a seal is opened? What is the purpose of the duration of the judgment? Why isn't it instant, complete? People and angels process what is going on, can draw conclusions and make personal application.

There is opportunity for change of mind, both for those who are the target of judgment and for those who are observing the judgment, those who aren't even under the judgment, such as we ourselves. We are observing these judgments in prospect, and they have particular characteristics, they have particular targets, they have particular effects. Some of them are personal.

You look at the first bowl judgment, as we see it here in chapter 16, and foul and loathsome sores come upon the men who have the mark of the beast. You can see the parallel in the plagues on Egypt, in the sixth plague, in Exodus 9, verses 8-12. The Lord said to Moses and Aaron, Take for yourselves handfuls of ashes from a furnace.

Let Moses scatter it toward the heavens in the sight of Pharaoh. Hebrew is so compact, and the narratives, especially in the Pentateuch, are so compressed. There is a lot of information if you

take time to look.

Just look at these first verses. The Lord said to Moses and Aaron, You two go to a furnace and get ashes. So you need more ashes than one man can carry.

This is going to be a two-man lift on the ashes. So Moses and Aaron go and get the handfuls. Moses is going to take a double scoop, Aaron is going to take a double scoop, and they're going to carry it in their hands.

Not in a bag, not on a tray, they're going to take these ashes in their hands. Aaron is going to have a double handful, Moses is going to have a double handful, and let Moses scatter it toward the heavens in the sight of Pharaoh. Pharaoh doesn't have a furnace in his throne room or when he sits outside under a palm tree.

Moses and Aaron are going to carry these ashes across town from the furnace to the presence of Pharaoh. Aaron is going to stand there with his double handful, Moses has got his handful, and he is going to begin tossing this into the air specifically for Pharaoh to watch. This is a process judgment.

Does Pharaoh say, Moses, what art thou doing? What doest thou? Why art thou casting ashes into the heavens? But he doesn't. He doesn't ask. He's not curious.

He's not concerned. Remember, there have been five previous plagues, and this is number six. If you see Moses and Aaron doing something, and you have any receptivity, any curiosity, if you've learned anything after five plagues, ask Moses what he's doing and see if you can stop it before it happens.

But Pharaoh's heart is hard. He doesn't care to ask. So in the presence of Pharaoh, Moses starts throwing these ashes up into the air.

I picture this is happening outside. There's a breeze that is carrying this dust in the direction of the majority of the land of Egypt. God tells Moses it will become fine dust in all the land of Egypt.

These handfuls of ashes are the opposite of the five loaves and the two fish. When Jesus takes them into his hands, they multiply. When Moses takes these ashes into his hands, and when he runs out of his batch, Aaron starts handing him his batch.

And remember, when there's two of a thing, when something is doubled, it means totality, completeness. And so this is going to go in all the land of Egypt, God says. And it will cause boils that break out in sores on man and beast throughout all the land of Egypt.

When you translate this into the Septuagint, the word in Greek that is translated boils is the same word that we have in our passage, sore boils. By the way, the Septuagint of Job, when he breaks out in sore boils, it's the same word. These are the Egyptian plague boils.

These are the Job skin disease, where he is suffering horrifically, same affliction. So you have this account doubled, as is so often the case. God tells them what is going to happen.

And then in Exodus chapter nine, verse 10, they took ashes from the furnace. They stood before Pharaoh. Moses scattered them toward heaven.

Notice the obedience. Moses is going to find out later, when he strikes the rock, instead of speaking to it, that this diligence in carrying out the instructions to the letter is important. Our instructions are clear, and we should endeavor to carry them out to the letter.

Jesus said, when you pray, pray this way. That's the way we should pray. It's the model prayer.

Don't pick different members of the Trinity to pray to. Don't start asking for different things. Remember that when you say, thy kingdom come, so that your will is done on earth the way it is in heaven.

How is God's will accomplished in heaven? What are we seeing throughout the book of Revelation? When God speaks from the throne room, speaks from the altar, angels are exact in their obedience. They don't do any less. They don't do any more.

God gives them an instruction. He hands them bowls and says, pour these out. That's what they do.

He provides them with horns or trumpets and says, sound these. That's what they do. Here's a key.

Open the God has expectations, and when God clearly communicates, we have no excuse for not responding in kind, responding fully. This is pictured in Leviticus chapter one with the hola, the whole burnt offering. I place my all on the altar, as the old hymn says, 100% investment.

So in verse 10, we have the description of what's going to happen in verses eight and nine. They took the ashes from the furnace. They stood before Pharaoh exactly as instructed.

Moses scattered them toward heaven, and they caused boils that break out in sores on man and beast. Seems a little bit redundant, but again, it's doubled. You start out with lesions and boils.

Breakout means they're spreading. This is like impetigo, where there is an infection that gets into your blood and it spreads. You start out with some and they get worse.

This is like a rash that begins maybe lightly or in one area and it spreads. You think of the affliction you get if you ever had chicken pox and you get the chicken pox virus wakes up in the sheaths of your nerves. What is that affliction that hits you in your ribcage usually? Patty? Shingles.

Shingles. Oops. Shingles will start small and spread, and depending on how severe it is, it can get in your face.

It can wrap around to your back. It's a miserable affliction, but the boils are the inception, and then it is a process. This is why it says this dust caused boils that break out in sores.

It starts and it spreads. It gives you time to think, what is this? What can I do about this? So the magicians could not stand before Moses because of the boils, for the boils were on the magicians and on all the Egyptians. Remember the magicians were cocky and arrogant when they reproduced the first few sign miracles, but they're embarrassed to try to stand there and be cocky when they've got boils and sores breaking out all over them.

To even appear before Moses is to admit defeat. If you're such a powerful magician, why have you got boils? And the personal message here, remember this affliction, the first bowl judgment is individual. It is parallel to things that happen in the environment, but remember, and this is something we'll notice looking at these bowl judgments.

As I mentioned earlier, for us, many things are a process. It begins and it is going to inevitably end. God looks at things, and in many cases in his mind, it is completed.

When he looks at us, we are completely and utterly saved. We are certain to have eternal life. In God's mind, it's a done deal.

There's no going back. There's no being unborn from your new birth. You have been born, you have been adopted as sons, you belong to God.

It's a done deal. So when the angels are blowing horns and observing, remember the seals are the earthly perspective. This is what man sees, and so horses are coming forth, and you look at economic and environmental destruction and hardship for people.

It's tough to get food and so on. That's the earthly perspective. Trumpets, they sound in the air.

This is where the angels, the powers of the air, that's where they dwell. And so they are seeing things, and they can see the inception of the process. This is where it begins.

From God's perspective, it doesn't say one-third of the earth. It's totally destroyed, because in God's mind, once he starts a thing, it's inevitable. I don't have to stand around and watch.

If you've ever seen movies where some hero that we want to or we're supposed to admire, they'll set a bunch of charges in a house or something. Then they're walking away, and they don't even look back. They've set a timer.

And so they've done this dozens of times. Somebody is walking away, and this entire explosion takes place behind them, and they don't even look back, because for them, they knew exactly

what they were doing. It was so certain.

They didn't have to watch to see, did it really destroy the house? I'm such a professional. I know where I put it. I know what it's going to do.

And I'm so good, I don't even have to look back. That's the human hero. But when God conceives and executes a thing, there's a sense in which he doesn't have to look back.

First angels poured out his bowl. These people are done. I know they're not going to repent, or I would stick around and watch.

But we are told twice in this sequence, despite the pain, despite the obvious source of these things, they do not repent. I still in Exodus chapter 9, the cause boils and break out on the sores on man and beast. There is blessing by association, and there is cursing by association.

All of the environmental factors that we see, the sea turning to blood and everything in it dying. What did the fish ever do to anybody? You get your squids and your octopi, if you ever watched that special where somebody made friends with a lady octopus, and it seemed to have a a recognition and sort of like our higher mammals where you feel like you've formed a relationship. At one point it shows its babies to the observer that it's gotten used to and so on.

Well, these harmless creatures, you get your whales, you get your dolphins and your porpoises, and you've got, you know, harmless forms of sea life of all kinds, they are all slain. They never did anything to anybody. Why are they slain? Because of us.

This is why Paul says over in Romans, around chapter 7 and 8, all the creation groans waiting for the redemption of the sons of God, waiting for us to complete our salvation so that there is the peaceable kingdom and there is an environment where nobody's worried about global warming, nobody's worried about chemicals getting into the water table and drugs getting throughout the environment and radio waves hastening the deterioration of your mind and all of the other insults that we inflict. Plastic particles showing up everywhere, mercury getting in the tuna. That's us.

We are a blight. We are termites on the surface of the planet, building ugly things and destroying beautiful things. Creation groans.

Creation expresses pain because of us. It is waiting, metaphorically, for humanity to be redeemed, to be purified, to be cleansed. Well, what is the application? We think that's going to be great.

Won't it be wonderful when we have a beautified earth here and ultimately God's going to dispose of this one and create an entirely new heavens and earth? But what does it mean for us? There is an analog. There is a parallel in our lives where there can be blessing by association to the extent that our salvation is bearing fruit. We have the fruit of the Spirit.

We are patient. We are thoughtful. We express one another love, sacrificial to self, beneficial to others.

We are providing an anticipation of a better world where sin is greatly suppressed. There will still be sin. There will still be capital punishment in the kingdom, as you know.

But with the rule of the Lord Jesus and the sons of David from Jerusalem, it will be so suppressed and quickly dealt with when it crops up that it will not be until Satan is released from the bottomless pit at the end of the kingdom on purpose. He was reserved for this, and God is going to drag him like a magnet through the sand that contains iron filings. And all of the people that have quietly grated and chafed under the rule and standards of God, there's no excuse.

They can't say, I didn't know. They've had 10 centuries to see the expressed righteousness of God, His grace, His mercy, the beauty of His design and His character, and they don't like it. We're seeing the opposite end.

How much pain does God have to inflict to change someone's mind? They can suffer unto death with sore boils and they do not repent. The environment around them can be destroyed. All provision can be taken away.

They do not repent. In our lives, we have a circle of blessing by association. If we are disobedient, if we are apathetic, if we are lackadaisical, careless, indifferent to God's plan and purpose for us, placing us where we are supposed to be, a lamp on a lampstand, illuminating things around us.

If we gutter and sputter like a candle with a bad wick, don't you just get tired of nursing a candle along because the design is bad, the candle's too fat, the wick's too little, and you light it, and the flame gets really, really small, and then it just drowns in its own wax. You dig it out, you chop the top off, you make the top like a cone, try to get it to burn for a little while. It's just a bad candle.

It won't burn. And you end up cutting it in pieces and putting it in your toolbox and using it to lubricate doorways. But you can't use it for a light.

It won't burn right. We are supposed to burn brightly with the light of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. That's our purpose.

And when we do that, we bless the environment around us, and we receive blessing ourselves. The opposite is also true. Looking at the universe as it exists, there is number one, the gravitational constant.

How strong is gravity related to matter? You know, when you get something planet size, it's got gravity. We stick to this spinning ball because gravity has a specific strength. If it was slightly stronger, not only would we be difficult and have to crawl along on our hands and knees, but

stars would burn too quickly and would collapse rapidly.

Gravity is what holds stars together, such as our sun. So if gravity was even slightly stronger than it is, stars could not exist and burn. You wouldn't have the night sky.

You wouldn't have galaxies spiraling around their centers and so on. If it was even slightly stronger, and this is many, many decimal places out, stars would incinerate themselves and collapse. If gravity was even slightly weaker, stars wouldn't burn.

They have to be compacted enough to sustain the combustion that is what makes a star happen, nuclear fusion. Secondly, the cosmological constant. It is fine-tuned so that if you changed it, you would have to take a decimal point and start putting zeros.

You have to go out 120 zeros and change that number by one digit. And the universe would expand so fast, galaxies would not form. The cosmological constant is basically the expansion.

The Bible says God spreads the heavens out, and science has determined that the heavens are being spread out. They're expanding. It's at a very specific rate.

If it was different by one at the end of 120 zeros, it would go so fast that galaxies would have never formed. If it was smaller by one digit, the universe would be collapsing. It is perfect to that level of precision.

There's nothing we make on the earth that is that precise. Tolerances and so on are not even close. Number three, the strong nuclear force.

This is the binding force of the atom. You've got protons, and they're all like the positive end of a magnet. If you've ever taken two magnets and put the positive ends together and they repel each other, you can't hardly get them to touch.

Well, protons are a strong positive. How do they stick together in the nucleus of an atom? You learned this in school. If that force was even 2% weaker, there would be no atomic nuclei.

Hydrogen with one proton is the only atom you could have. You couldn't get any other atoms. If it was even 2% weaker, if it was slightly stronger, everything would fuse together into giant heavy metal atoms, and you wouldn't have any hydrogen.

Therefore, no water, etc. Number four, the electromagnetic force constant, which affects the way atoms bind to each other. If it was off by a very small amount, you wouldn't get molecules.

You wouldn't get compounds where atoms will coalesce and join together. Remember valences and missing electrons and that? Well, this is governed by the electromagnetic force constant, and it is perfect. Each of these constants is independent of the other.

It's not like, well, I set one and the others magically happen. Number five is the weak nuclear

force, which governs stellar nucleosynthesis. This is where stars make elements.

If there was even a slight variation, you would only have the gases. You wouldn't have material atoms, and therefore nothing to make stuff out of. It would just be a gas universe.

Number six, the proton to electron mass ratio. Protons are 1836 times larger than electrons. 1836 times bigger.

If that was off by even a slight amount, atoms and molecules wouldn't exist. There wouldn't be the balance so that the electrons orbit as they should. Number seven, the fine structure constant, which controls electromagnetic interaction strength.

Small changes, atoms are no longer stable. Your atoms blow apart. Number eight, the entropy at the Big Bang.

It had extremely low entropy, one part in $10^{10^{123}}$, which is just beyond imagination, which enables structures to form. You would have had a plasma burst and that's it. There would be nothing stable if that entropy state had been any different than what it was at the inception of the Big Bang.

The expansion rate of the universe alluded to earlier balance between collapse and runaway expansion. It's perfect, but that was set at the Big Bang. What are the odds that something randomly exploding out of nothing, of course, nobody knows how the initial thing even happened, but that it would happen so that the universe is expanding at a perfect rate for the formation of matter and the expression of energy.

Matter-antimatter asymmetry. Science has learned that better than 80% of the universe we can't sense and measure because it's dark matter and dark energy. I personally think this is what heaven is made of.

We just say, well, it's just dark matter. It's just blobs of stuff we can't measure. Well, the matter that we can measure is organized and creates structures.

You have solid surfaces. You have beings. Why not in the antimatter world? That's another subject, but that's number 10, matter-antimatter asymmetry.

There's a slight imbalance. And if it wasn't a precise balance between antimatter and matter, matter would cease to exist. You've seen this in science fiction, something made of antimatter and antimatter meet and they cancel each other out and bad things happen.

This now is talking about the galaxies and the stars. Number 11, star formation rates. If formation rate is too rapid, the stars don't live long enough to create a stable environment where planets can sustain life.

If they're too slow to form, you don't get enough heavy elements. Supernova frequency is necessary for heavy elements. If you have too many supernovas, the radiation they produce sterilizes everything and you never get enduring life.

Galaxy type and structure. Spiral galaxies like the Milky Way provide stable regions for life. Elliptical galaxies lack ongoing star formation.

And when people say, well, look how many stars, how many galaxies, and we work out a thing, we say there are so many planets that can sustain life. No, there's not. Because you don't have the right conditions for galaxy type and structure.

The galactic habitable zone. You have to be in a galaxy that is not too close to the core because radiation fries everything. Can't be too distant.

Again, you don't have enough heavy elements. Heavy elements are interacting with gravity and there is a Goldilocks zone in a spiral galaxy where life such as ours can exist and thrive. Solar system fine-tuning.

Number 15. We are located in the habitable zone of our solar system. Liquid water that can also go to vapor and also freeze is only possible in a very narrow band of our solar system and we're in it.

You have the role of Jupiter acting as a gravitational shield sweeping a lot of debris and attracting it out of the path of our Earth so that the Earth doesn't look like our moon. The Earth's orbital stability. We have very low eccentricity which yields a stable climate for life.

Our axial tilt, the 23.5 degree tilt of the axis, gives us seasons but they're moderate. If it was too large we would have extreme climate swings. You'd be boiling like the equator for a few months and then you'd be freezing like the poles in other months.

Number five. Earth-specific fine-tuning. The large moon we have stabilizes our axial tilt.

It drives the tides that are important for the ecosystem, stirring the oceans. Number 20. Plate tectonics recycle carbon.

This regulates our climate, maintains continental diversity. The magnetic field, our Van Allen radiation belts and so on, shield us from solar and cosmic radiation which would fry us even if everything else was good. The composition of our atmosphere.

There is a precise oxygen-nitrogen balance. Too much oxygen, stuff is combusting all over the place. Too little, complex life is impossible.

We have chemical and atmospheric balance. Biological preconditions. Why am I going through all of this? God put these here.

The simple ones man all the way up to the 19th century could observe and did and realized that there was the music of the spheres as they called it. The movement in the sky that was predictable. The seasons on this earth and tracking the movement of the sun.

All of these ancient civilizations and you see their records. The orientation of pyramids and other structures to observe and measure what's going on in the sky. It is orderly and predictable.

Where there is order and predictability, there is intelligence. Intelligence creates order. Entropy dictates chaos.

Without intelligent organization, in Paul Simon's words, everything put together falls apart. That's entropy, unless you take steps. So in our chemical and biological conditions here, we have an energy level in the carbon nucleus that allows it to be formed in stars.

Without it, carbon would be extremely rare. Therefore, life would be extremely rare. Water, its properties.

It has a high heat capacity and because our planet is so largely covered with oceans, this stabilizes our climate. The balance of land and ocean is intentional. That's why we have a habitable climate.

Water expands when it is frozen, which is a strange and unique property. You freeze it, the molecules slow down, but the density decreases, causing ice to float. This preserves aquatic life.

Otherwise, ice would form, sink pretty soon. You've got an ice ball for a planet. Transparency of our atmosphere allows visible light in and infrared energy out.

We have an energy balance. We lose the heat. This is why they're worried about the upper atmosphere.

But in summary, our universe is measurable and discoverable. This is the evidence that God has put of a peaceful type for man to respond to. It is designed to draw us to look for the creator and the designer.

What may be known of God is manifest in creation, Paul says in Romans 1. His eternal power and his deity, all of the things that make up his deity, his omniscience, his love, his grace, and so on. But these physical laws that God has placed us in and allowed us to observe are mathematically elegant, symmetry, beauty, and they are consistent. It's not variable.

You go to one part of space and, well, the laws of physics are completely different over here. It's predictable, as is the plan and purpose of God. He is the same.

Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today, and forever. So is the Father. So is the environment that God has created for us during our period of residency.

And because our atmosphere is transparent, we can make astronomical observations and see the witness of God in the stars. Psalms says, when I look in the heavens and I see the stars, I am caused to consider what is man, that you are mindful of him, or the son of man, that you visit him, that you take an interest in him. He got that looking at the stars.

Solar eclipses, the moon exactly covers the sun, exactly, so that we can make observations. The angular size of the sun and the moon are identical. So you have these precise eclipses, and this enables our study of the sun and solar flares and so on, the corona.

So all of this speaks of design. If you do not respond to those, God says, let me try the other end of the spectrum. Let me start taking those things away.

Now the oceans are not your friend. Now what is in the sky is not your friend. Now what is happening on the land is not conducive.

You don't appreciate these things. You don't see them. You're not thankful.

What does it say in Romans 1? When they knew him as God, they glorified him not as God. Neither were they thankful, but they became vain in their imagination, and their foolish hearts were darkened. They were not thankful.

So let's try the other end. Let's take those things away that you take for granted, that you ascribe to other causes. I'll take them away.

See if that will wake you up. God does everything possible to draw us to himself, to save us, to grant us eternal life. But those who reject are making a free will decision, and there isn't even anything God can do, positive or negative, that will change the hearts of some people.

We want to be teachable, malleable, compliant, persuadable, multiple times. I am persuaded. We want to be amenable to the persuasion of God, so that we can be in the very center of blessing and opportunity in his plan.

Let's pause here and take our break. That is our application for looking at these bolds in the general sense. God has already spoken in the positive.

He is speaking here in the negative. He does the same in our lives. What is our response? We'll see more when we come back from the break.