

Revelation 18:1 – March 9, 2025

Links

- Wretched Watchmen YouTube Channel
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How The Devil Tries To Bring Me Down
Pastor JD Farag

DAVID: Join me in prayer. Lord, You are awesome in this place. You are awesome all the time in our lives, Lord. Again Lord, we just lift up this time to You Lord, as we get into Your word. May You speak to our hearts, Lord, and keep our eyes and our minds always focused on You as we go through Your word, Lord. We lift this time up to You. We thank You and praise You in Jesus' name.

PASTOR JD: His name. Amen and amen. And good morning and welcome. So glad you're here. Wow. Sounds like you're glad you're here too. You can be seated. Welcome, welcome. Those of you online, we're so glad that you're joining with us as well.

Before we jump in, though, I want to let you know that I've accepted an invitation. I have not done this in years, but the reason for accepting this one is because it is a no-travel, [*Chuckling*] [*I'm not done yet*] no-cost, [*Sign me up*] online Bible Prophecy Shindig. I didn't say conference. I didn't say conference. Shindig. Yeah!

It's hosted by Zak Spiro. It will begin at 12 noon, Central Standard Time, which is 8:00 a.m. Hawaii time, next Saturday, March 15th. And we are going to have our amazing team provide a link to Zak's Wretched Watchmen Prophecy Misfits YouTube Channel. I'm not kidding. Misfits. Wretched. We're the guys that don't fit in with the rest of the prophecy crowd because we're too controversial. I better be careful.

So I'm going to be the last speaker, but it's going to be — the other speakers are going to be livestreamed, live, but mine will be a prerecorded Q&A session of pre-selected questions. And I actually did the recording, and I asked him if he was going to air the whole thing. He said, yeah. I said, how long is it? He goes, an hour and 38 minutes. I said, listen, my people are used to it. So...

Anyway, I would really encourage you, though, to watch the other prophecy speakers. A couple of them are actually Calvary Chapel pastors, and I know they're going to have a good word. And whatever you do, don't call it a prophecy conference. It's a prophecy shindig.

[*Laughter*]

Okay, now we can get into the Word. We're going to start *Revelation Chapter 18* today, and we're just going to take and tackle the first eight verses. So it's like, how do you eat an elephant? One bite at a time, if you're able, and if not, that's okay. But just for the reading

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of God's word, if you would stand and just follow along. This comes out of the Old Testament. They would stand for the reading of God's word. But if where you're seated is fine, please, no problem.

Beginning in *verse 1*, John, who was commanded to write by the Holy Spirit, says, **"After this I saw another angel coming down from heaven. He had great authority, and the earth was illuminated by his splendor. With a mighty voice [Verse 2] he shouted: [I like this angel already] 'Fallen! Fallen is Babylon the Great!' [And here's why] She has become a dwelling for demons and a haunt for every impure spirit, a haunt for every unclean bird, a haunt for every unclean and detestable animal.**

For all the nations [Verse 3] have drunk the maddening wine of her adulteries. The kings of the earth committed adultery with her, and the merchants of the earth grew rich from her excessive luxuries."

Then [Verse 4] I heard another voice from heaven say: 'Come out of her, My people,' so that you will not share in her sins, so that you will not receive any of her plagues; for her sins are piled up to heaven, and God has remembered her crimes. Give back to her as she has given; pay her back double for what she has done. Pour her a double portion from her own cup. [That actually has its origins in the Old Testament] [Retribution, restitution, double]

Give her [Verse 7] as much torment and grief as the glory and luxury she gave herself. In her heart she boasts, 'I sit enthroned as queen. I am not a widow; I will never mourn.' Therefore in one day [We'll read later in this chapter "one hour"] her plagues will overtake her: death, mourning and famine. She will be consumed by fire, for mighty is the Lord God who judges her."

Wow! What an elephant of a passage in prophecy. Let's pray and ask God's help. Lord, help us. Help us understand this prophecy, this passage here in Your word. We humbly submit and readily admit that we need the Holy Spirit to teach us and guide us as we navigate our way through these first eight verses. But Lord, as we do, we need You, some desperately, to speak a word into our lives in and through Your word.

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So Lord, in order to do that, we also need the Holy Spirit to get our attention, undivided attention, and keep at bay and away any distraction that might cause our minds to wander. Because I don't think there's one of us here or online that wants to miss what it is that You have for us here today. So Lord, speak. Your servants are listening. We ask in Jesus' name. Amen. You can be seated. Thank you very much.

So I want to talk with you today about some of the specific tactics that the devil tries *[Key word, tries]* to use to bring me down and trap me in. For the benefit of those who maybe haven't been with us in our verse-by-verse study through *Revelation*, what we're doing is taking the prophetic information here in *Revelation* and building a bridge to the personal application, and this for several reasons, chief of which is that we cover the prophetic information in our Prophecy Updates as we have for many years, and as we did today. Here's what I'm hoping to accomplish. And it will only be accomplished by the grace of God and the power of the Holy Spirit.

I'm hoping to expose some of the many, and there are many, tactics of the enemy. Think about what the Apostle Paul said to the Corinthian church. **“Don't be ignorant of the *[I love the King James here]* the wiles of the devil.”** Gotta say it with a growl. The strategies, the tactics, the methods, the ways that the enemy attacks. Because as Jesus tells us, **“The enemy comes only *[Solely]* to steal, kill, and destroy.”**

And he strategize, as Peter tells us, and Paul as well, he studies our lives. He, you know, like a military strategist, you know, those old World War II photos of the strategist peering over, hunched over a map, strategizing? That's what Satan does with the map of your Christian life. He studies you. And he's patient. He waits, and he wants to attack at an opportune time when you're the most vulnerable, not really expecting it or suspecting it. So he employs the demonic realm to launch covert attacks.

And this is why we, as Christians, experience varying levels of spiritual warfare. And sometimes it manifests in a myriad of ways. You know, you might wake up one day, and there's just like this oppressive, heavy, gloomy, weighty something, and it could very well be a spiritual attack in the demonic realm.

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So as we talked about First Service, what we're to do, what we're told in God's word to do in times like that is go right to prayer. Ask for discernment. Ask for wisdom from above. **"You have not because you ask not,"** James says. God will give you so much wisdom, you won't — you'll say, stop, that's enough. I can't contain anymore. He gives liberally, withholding nothing. All we have to do is ask. We don't even have to say please. Was that too much? **"If any of you lacks wisdom, (*Raising hand high*) let him ask of God."**

And he contrasts the worldly wisdom with the heavenly wisdom, the wisdom of the world, and the wisdom from above. And it's almost really a gauge, a template, a grid, if you prefer, by which to discern whether or not this is of God or not. Because you see, the peace and the wisdom from above is first pure and peaceable, then gentle and easy to be entreated and full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality or hypocrisy, bearing fruit of righteousness, whereas, worldly wisdom is lusting for one's pleasure. It's really the antithesis of the wisdom from above.

So you might go throughout your day, and something just isn't quite right, and you're in a mood. And sometimes — this is interesting. Hear me out on this. Sometimes it's not so much, you know, you're not what the medical community would call clinically depressed, but you're just kind of down and unmotivated and no energy and... And then all of a sudden, next thing you know, you're starting to think about somebody wronging you. And you take it and run.

And the enemy couldn't be happier. Now he's got you. He brought you down, and he trapped you in. And he's very subtle. He's very cunning. He operates under the radar. He masquerades as an angel of light to trick, to deceive. You never have the enemy come up to you — by the way, just so we're clear, he's not wearing red tights and, you know, with horns and a pitchfork. The enemy will never come to you and say, "Hi, I'm Satan, and I'm here to destroy your life." In fact, it's the opposite that's true.

So this is why I was compelled, even constrained concerning the text that we have before us today to go this way and tackle this tough topic. Because it's kind of, you know, we tend to shy away from passages and even prophecies like this. And I think we do so to our own peril because all Scripture is inspired.

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So here's what we're going to do. I'm going to share with you just five of the many covert tactics that the devil uses with, again, the sole goal of deceiving me and bringing me down because he hates me. Jesus said, "Don't take it personal. [It's a very loose paraphrase] The world's going to hate you because of your association with Me. You're guilty by association. The world hated Me first. That's why the world hates you, so just... like water off the back of a duck." Is that how the saying goes? Well, you fill a blank with your own.

So five. First one. I'll go quickly, but I don't want us to miss what's here. And I'm really looking forward to what the Lord is going to do in our time together in His word. The first one's in the first two verses, and it is a biggie. His covert tactic is to deceive me into dismissing the demonic.

Here, John writes that another angel with great authority, powerful light, illuminating light. This is not God, but clearly an angel that was in the presence of God because he still shined with the Shekinah Glory of God. And he's great in authority, powerful in light, and mighty in voice. And he shouts: **"Fallen! Fallen is Babylon the Great!"**

The previous chapter, *Chapter 17*, by the way, was about the fall of Babylon religiously. This chapter, *Chapter 18*, is about the fall of Babylon commercially. Same city, different aspect. Notice the detail. **"Fallen! Fallen..."** Two aspects. This is a detail, like much of Scripture provides us with, but in this case, we're actually provided the detail of why. We're given the "why" behind the "what" of Babylon the Great falling.

And we're told, here's why. It had become a dwelling place for demons. Demons were ruling, dominating, dwelling Babylon. Now how does that apply to us? What's the takeaway? And why do you say that he deceives me into dismissing the demonic? Because this is one of his strategies, covert operations. It's called 'Operation Trick Them About Who I Am.'

How does he do that? Well, Satan dwells in the extremes. Let me explain. On one extreme, we've understated, underestimated the power of Satan, and we've relegated him to just that, you know, cartoon character. And we're very dismissive of the demonic. And that's one extreme.

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But then they got the other extreme that gives Satan more credit than he's due, making him more powerful than he is, to the point where he gets elevated to being equal to God. He's not. He's a created being. I like how one said, "The devil is God's devil." He created him. And the devil can do nothing unless God allows him to. He's subject to God. He's powerful, but he's not all-powerful. Only God is all-powerful.

And there's this notion that has gained traction that somewhere along the way, Satan got on a level playing field with God. You know, in this corner, we have the match of the century. No! Why do you think we have these parenthetical insertions in Scripture where we're reminded to give us hope, especially when the passage is kind of intense, that the Lord is going to destroy him with the breath and the fire of His mouth? I've asked for a reserved, front row seat for that. I just want to be there. Whoo! Oh yeah!

You know, there's a passage I want to (Frustrated sigh) I forget chapter and verse, but it basically says we're going to be astonished when we see Lucifer, so much so — and we will see him — but so astonished will we be that we will look at him and go, that's who deceived all the nations of the earth? This is a joke. You got to be kidding me. That's him? Ha ha! That puts it into perspective. Sorry for the drama there. A little dramatic, but I think you get the point.

Well, we can go to two different extremes, the balance and the wisdom, and the Word is in the middle. Don't underestimate him. But don't overestimate him either. He is powerful and very intelligent, and we're also told in Scripture, very beautiful, which is inconsequential. But don't dismiss him, nor should you go to the other extreme and esteem him, elevate him. I wonder how many times — I'll just speak for myself in my own life — how many times there have been situations that had the component of the demonic and it went unrecognized because I didn't discern it, the discernment of spirits?

And worse — and I'm just being open with you — my default is like Peter to fight a spiritual battle with carnal or intellectual weaponry. Paul writing to the Corinthians said our weapons are not carnal, but spiritual to take down strongholds. What are strongholds? Things that have a strong hold — deeply profound, I know — on your life.

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And that's what Satan wants. He wants a stronghold. He wants a foothold first. He tries to get his foot in the door, and then once he's in — we let him in — we fully cooperate with him, and that foothold becomes a stronghold. Why? Because we underestimated just how cunning and evil he really is. Be very careful going to the extremes. And by the way, you'll never see me do this. Could you imagine how your heart would sink if I made the announcement, 'We're going to do a six-month study on the Devil'? Oh, wow, when are you starting? Because I'll go to a different church. Let me know when you're done. No, I'm not going to do that.

But I think I'd be grossly remiss were I to throw the proverbial baby out with the bathwater in the sense that, yeah, I'm not going to overstate or elevate him, but I'm not going to dismiss him and be ignorant of his devices, the tools he uses, like the tools of discouragement, the tools of doubt, the tools of fear. That's one of the powerful power tools. Worry. Anxiety. Guilt. Ooh! He polishes that one every day. Condemnation. Powerful tool. Don't be dismissive of the power of the demonic.

And that brings us to our second covert tactic in *verses 4* through — pardon me, *verse 3*. And they're all biggies. Did I already say it was a biggie? Okay, this is a biggie-biggie. He deceives me into desiring worldly riches. This is so interesting. Again, the detail. John, by the Holy Spirit, tells us that all the nations were intoxicated by and grew rich from the excessive luxuries, not just luxuries, in excess, and their lust for her worldly pleasures.

This, like the first one, is perhaps one of the most dangerous and I would even venture to say successful tactics of the enemy such that he lies about what truly satisfies. Let me explain. Only Jesus satisfies. But here's the problem. And I'm sure you've heard this put in a variety of ways. We have a God-shaped void, emptiness in our lives that only He can fill.

But here comes Satan's minions. "No! Look at this." I mean, after all, he's the father of lies. And so this is why the devil lies and tries to get us to try to fill that emptiness with that or them or this. And you know what ends up happening? Not only will it never satisfy, it will actually make you even want more. Think about riches and wealth.

And by the way, let me just hasten to say, this has nothing to do with people who have worldly wealth. That's not the issue. The issue is, is when the worldly wealth has you. It's

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not what kind of car you have. It's does that car have you washing it every day? I better not look at anybody on that one. It's not what you have. What has you? There's nothing wrong with wealth. What's wrong is when we desire it.

1 Timothy 6, starting in *verse 6*, perhaps amongst, if not the most misquoted passages in all Scripture about **“the love of money,”** not money. Money's amoral. It's neutral. It can be used for immoral or moral purposes. It's what do you do with it. No, it's **“the love of money that is the root of all kinds of evil.”**

Now, he precedes that by saying that we should be content because **“godliness with contentment is great gain.”** Jesus said, **“What shall it profit a man if he gains the whole world, but loses his own soul?”**

And here comes the enemy, and he just dangles this whatever, you fill in the blank, in front of you and says to you, “Yeah, this will satisfy you.” And it does just the opposite. It leaves you emptier and wanting more. This is especially true and proven, by the way. It was asked of one very wealthy man before he died, “How much more money do you need?” To which he responded, “Just a little bit more.”

In other words, God never designed or wired us or created us, better said, to be satiated by anything or anyone but Him. “Taste of the Lord and see that He is good.” I’m good. I'm satisfied. He fills you with the Holy Spirit and you want for nothing because the Lord is my shepherd. When you're full you're not hungry.

Let me try that again. “Wow, Pastor JD, a firm grasp of the obvious. I never thought of it like that.” Wait. Just let me — give me a do-over. If my appetite has been satiated by Jesus and the indwelling, empowering, satisfying Holy Spirit, and I'm walking in the Spirit, living by the Spirit, I won't have an appetite to fulfill the lust of the flesh.

You know when I was a young Christian — (Stumbling over words) **“Walk in the Spirit and you won't fulfill the lust of the flesh.”** I'm like, walk? Is that a certain way you walk, or what?

Here's what it's saying. If you're so full of the Spirit, you won't be tempted by the Taco Bell drive-thru. No, I'm serious. Yes, I use that analogy, but... Now, let's flip it around. If I don't eat — my son and I went to Costco together, and we ate before, and it cut our bill in half.

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[Laughter]

No, no, I'm serious. You know what I'm talking about, right? Never — you're told this. You know this. Never go grocery shopping when you're hungry; You're going to come home with the store. So we're looking at this thing going, that doesn't even look good. That's because we had an amazing lunch before, and we were so full that we didn't even buy it. You see where I'm going with this?

You're so full of the Spirit, it's kind of like, you know, here's this temptation to fill the emptiness. You know, I got an empty stomach. Man, I'm really hungry. It's growling, you know. But no, I'm full. And then I'm not tempted because I'm not going to give in. I'm not going to cave into the temptation, the lure because I am stuffed. I'm full with the Holy Spirit. Now, if you invite me over for dinner, and I give in to that Taco Bell drive-thru on the way, you know, 12-pack, tacos supreme with sour cream, and I just slam it down. Then I show up at your doorstep. You got this beautiful gourmet meal that you spent all day preparing. How hungry am I? I'm so full, I'm (Gagging sounds) That's how it works.

And especially when it comes to the riches, the excessive luxuries of this world that are always dangled in front of us. You know, when I say, "covert tactics to bring me down" and then I add "trap me in" — one's life, the Proverbs says, is consumed by the very wealth that he has. It takes — first of all, think about the time it takes. The devotion, the distraction. It's a competing, not a complimenting.

And again, please, I'm not talking about those who are good stewards of God's money and have been entrusted with wealth. The Lord knows how much you can handle. That's not just adversity. That's prosperity too. Because He'll never be party to our disobedience. He's never going to give — that's *1 Corinthians 10:13*.

We always couch it in terms of adversity. God won't give you more than you can handle. But actually, God won't give you more prosperity than you can handle either. And He knows where that break point is. And it's different for everybody. Because you see, to whom much has been given, much is required. And He knows and can't be party to our disobedience. But He will prosper and bless an obedient Christian who's walking in the Spirit according to His word. It's just going to be by default.

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But what Paul writes to Timothy about when he says that the love of money is the root. He says, into this world you came with nothing. When you leave this world, guess what? You leave with nothing. But you can send it ahead. You can't take it with you. Like one said, Larry Burkette was famous for this quote, "I've yet to see a U-Haul behind a hearse." I'll give you a minute on that one.

You can't un-see that one, right? You going to take it with you? Yeah, I don't think so. Naked I came into this world; naked I'm going out of this world. Job said, **"The Lord gives, the Lord takes away. Blessed be the name of the Lord."** Paul said I've learned to be content in whatever my situation is, whether I'm starving and gone without food and sleep for days, or if I'm just rich, richly blessed abundantly and exceedingly so. I'm content because that's not the gauge.

What is the gauge? Godliness with contentment is great gain. So you know the more you have, the more you have to worry about. Because see, once you start acquiring worldly riches, now you got to hold on to them. So now you're kind of doing exactly what God's word said would happen. Those that pursue — they love money, and they pursue worldly riches, do so to their own peril and pierce themselves through with many sorrows.

Ask Solomon about this, the wealthiest man, arguably who ever lived in human history. Nothing satisfied. Re-read Ecclesiastes. Vanity, vanity. Empty, empty. It's all empty. I've thought having 700 wives and a thousand concubines would satisfy. Oh, wow, I'm exhausted just reading the verse! I thought these building projects and these parks and trees, planting these beautiful orchards and fields and vineyards would satisfy.

No. It just made a lot of work. He comes to the end and he says, here's the conclusion of the matter. Wealthiest guy who ever lived. Wisest. He had the supernatural wisdom, unparalleled, that he asked for when he was anointed king after his father, David, in a very interesting way because he was young at the time, and now he's King of Israel. He's got some big shoes to fill, David, his father. Yeah, that David.

So he's like, God, I don't even know how to walk into the throne correctly. I don't even — I don't have the foggiest idea what I'm supposed to do. And God comes to him and says, ask

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of Me for anything. He said, you know, I want to ask You for wisdom. And God knew he was going to do it because God's all-knowing.

So God says because you didn't ask for riches, I'm going to give you wisdom and riches. And he got both. And you get to the end of Ecclesiastes — remember our verse-by-verse study through Ecclesiastes? We should have bought T-shirts. 'I survived a verse-by-verse study through Ecclesiastes and lived the tell about it.'

At the end, the conclusion of the matter, the bottom line — I mean, you can go ahead and try. I've tried everything I could. I had all the money and then some. I tried this to satisfy. I tried that to satisfy. I bought this to satisfy. I did that to satisfy. And nothing satisfied. It left me more unsatisfied. And that's the conclusion of the matter: To love God and obey His commandments.

Isn't that what Jesus said? I'll know that you love Me by your obedience to Me. It's not, if you really love Me, you'd obey Me! That's how my mom used to always say it in her high-pitched tone with her thick accent. "Wahido! (High-pitched voice) You don't love me. If you loved me, you would obey me!" So man, that messed me up. That took me a few years to kind of unwind that deal.

And I come to Christ. I'm a new creation. And I read the same thing. (Chuckle) "If you love Me, you'll obey My commandments." I'm like, oh, no! Not again! It's not what it sounds like. It's not, if you really loved Me, you would obey Me. (Annoyed voice)

No. See, obedience is better than sacrifice. God doesn't want your sacrifice. God became the sacrifice. When Samuel goes to Saul and he disobeyed God and didn't destroy all of the Amalekites, even took prisoner the king of Amalek, who in the end would be a descendant of that very Amalekite that would kill Saul.

There's a sermon right there. Kill it before it kills you. Paul says, "**Mortify the deeds of the flesh.**" Be merciless with sin because sin will be merciless with you. Sin is its own reward, and your sin will find you out. So question: What's the one thing — you know how we struggle about what do you give the person or buy a gift for the person who has everything? Well, God has everything. What am I going to give to God? He has everything. Not yet. Not really.

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Think this through with me. There's one thing he does not necessarily have that you can give Him. Obedience. Obedience. That's the conclusion of the matter. I gotta move on. Don't look at your watches.

Verses 4-6, we find our third one. He deceives me into wanting to be accepted. John writes that he heard another voice from heaven calling God's people out. Get out! Why? I don't want you to share in her sins and ensuing plagues. I don't want you to participate in, share in what's coming upon her.

Well, that is an interesting word here. Share? Some of your translations might render it “participate.” In the original language of the Greek New Testament, it's the Greek word *koinos*, which in the noun form is *koinonia*. Sound familiar yet? What does *koinonia* mean? It means fellowship, friendship. Now, in this context, it's the angel from heaven saying, get out of that relationship, fellowship [*koinonia*] so that you're not participating [*koinonia*] in her sins and the ensuing plagues that are coming. This is James. Interesting, the woman they committed adultery, spiritual adultery. And is that not what James said? **“Friendship with the world is...”**

Man, James. We survived that book too, right? We took our time. That was a tough book. But you have to understand the backstory behind it. James was the half-brother, biologically, of the Savior of the world. God incarnate was his half-brother, Jesus, the Christ. How would you like growing up, be growing up in a home where your half-brother was God and perfect, and his room was always clean? I mean, he pulls no punches. That's why you don't really read James. You endure it.

Right out of the chute too, I mean, he just gets right to the point. This guy doesn't dance around, play around. He doesn't do what I do, take you on the scenic route. No. He's just like, I'm going to get you there. In your face. He has the audacity.

Listen, you won't find this today in the church today. And yet, he — because the pastors behind the pulpit, they want you to come back. So they won't, unless they teach verse-by-verse, they're going to stay far away from James when he says, **“You adulterers and adulteresses!”**

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Oh, people are already walking out. You don't even have to bow your head and close your eyes. Bye. Don't you know that friendship, fellowship, koinonia, participating, sharing with the world, you're at enmity with God? You're an enemy of God. You're committing spiritual adultery. Tell me how you really feel, James.

No. I'm trying to lighten it up a little bit because that was even... What is it about us? I know it's the sin nature, the Adamic nature, but what is it about us that wants to be friends? We send the world a friend request on social media. We like their posts, hoping they'll like ours in return. No. Unfriend them. They're not your friends. And besides, you're an adulterer and an adulteress. You're committing spiritual adultery.

Jesus said, *Matthew 6*, **“Where your treasure is, that's where your heart's going to be also.”** Notice He didn't say it the other way around. How do you know where one's heart is? Show me where their treasure is. Oh, they laid it up in heaven. That's where their heart is. Where's their treasure? Oh, they dug it down deep and invested in the earth. Well, that's where their heart is.

But then He says this. You cannot not, not you should not, not it would be a really good idea if you did not. No. He says you cannot. It's one or the other. It's either/or. It's not both. “You cannot serve God and mammon.” Money, wealth, materialism. It's either way. You either be devoted to the one and despise the other, or vice versa.

And here's the problem. And it really ties in with the third one — pardon me, the second one about worldly riches. Because see, no one wants to be the only one. You remember in school; this is back in the days when they would pick teams. And I was always, in fact, I never got picked. I was just the last. They said, well, you can go on their team. That's a real morale booster right there. They always picked the good ones first. I think they did away with it. Now everybody gets a trophy. Everybody's a winner! You talk about extremes.

What's your point, Pastor? My point is this. This is strong. Never underestimate the power of peer pressure, wanting to be liked by the world, wanting to be accepted by the world, wanting to participate with the world. You know what's sad? Many have fallen prey to this tactic because of that powerful pressure to fit in and be accepted, lest they stand out as the called out being in, but not of, this world.

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There should be something so peculiar about the Christian that it makes the world scratch their heads. Something different about you. You're not like the rest. You could care less. Yeah, you're not a man pleaser. You're not dancing to the beat of the drum played by man. There's only one drum. You have an audience of one. And that drum that you dance to — if you have a better metaphor or analogy, you can let me know. But I march the beat of His drum only.

I tell you, it's so freeing. It's so freeing. It's not that I — don't get me wrong. If you're displeased with me or my sermons... I better not. Let me start over, all right? One more do-over. If you're displeased with me, but God is pleased with me, sorry. I don't care. If He — now you flip that around and I'm pleasing to you, but displeasing to Him, now we got a problem.

So when I drive home after a long Sunday — you guys are looking at me like, we have to sit through the long Sundays — there's always just this dialog, which is what prayer is. It's not a monologue. It's a dialog. Just talking to God. Simple. That's what prayer is. We've over complicated just talking to God. I just, Lord, was that pleasing to You? Was that pleasing and acceptable in Your sight?

But believe you me, if it was not, He'll let me know. Not a condemnation, just a conviction of, you know, it's not what you said. It's how you said what you said. Your words weren't seasoned with grace. I'm working on that, by the way. Pray for me for that, by the way. This last one.

Lastly, we're done. Verse — oh, no. We got two more. Oh! Oh, sorry. Sorry. So you're displeased with me now. Let's go fast. He deceives me into boasting about myself. Oh, my goodness. This verse is so interesting when it comes to one thinking more highly of oneself than they ought, which always ensues with a boasting about oneself. Now please listen. Boasting is the symptom of the problem of pride.

Boasting isn't the core issue. Pride is. Boasting is a result. Any and all such boasting is the result of a haughty spirit and a prideful heart, which again, is one of the enemy's most successful covert tactics. I mean, it goes without saying, right?

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But the scriptures are replete with warnings about pride, a haughty spirit, arrogance contrasted with humility, especially in the Proverbs. But here's the thing about pride, and we get it wrong. We say pride comes before the fall. That's wrong. The Proverbs says that a haughty spirit comes before a fall, and pride cometh before destruction. What are we reading about here concerning Babylon? Its destruction. They're boasting.

Where's the boasting coming from? Well, they fancy themselves as being better than anyone else, having more than anyone else. At its core, when you peel back all the layers, what you'll find, in a word, is pride. And it always, without exception, comes before destruction.

Last one, *verse 8*. See, that was fast and rightfully so because I was getting convicted on that one. So we go through those ones quicker than we do the other ones that I'm not so convicted on. Here's the last one, and it's, I mean, it's just so fitting, so apropos. He deceives me into forgetting how it ends. Hear me out. Stay with me. I will close.

This is striking. What John is writing is that the consuming fire of God's judgment comes in the end, in that hour and on that day, one day, one hour, which we'll see later on in the chapter. Now, why do I point this out and emphasize that? Because it might seem like they're getting away with what they're doing, and evil is prospering. But God will have the final word. The world system will fall, and Jesus Christ will reign, and we will reign with Him. That's how it ends. You know, you're watching a series on Netflix. I know you don't. You're spiritual. I'm talking about other people in other church.

And you know there's like eight seasons. So you know that the actor is not — even though they're in a perilous, impossible situation, you know they're going to survive it because he's got to live to Season 8. You've already seen the thumbnail for that and the episode with him in it. So you know how it ends. But by the way, this is something I want to leave you with and end with because it is very powerful, and it could be a life changer in yours and my life. Doesn't knowing how it ends settle you?

Now what if you didn't know that there were eight seasons? You didn't even know if there was another episode. You'd be sitting on the edge of your seat, biting your nails instead of the popcorn. Oh no! What's going to happen?

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No. God says, no, no, no; I don't want you doing that. I'm going to tell you how this whole thing ends in detail. And spoiler alert: For you, it ends very well, very well. So when you know how it ends, you don't freak out when it happens because you already knew, and you already know how it's going to end. It's going to end with the reign of the King of kings and the Lord of lords. And John inserted that to give them hope. And I think it is for us today to give us hope because I know a lot of people are discouraged and giving into hopelessness and even despair, and this need not be so.

I'll close with the takeaway, which is simply that we all have this proclivity to forget how it all ends. And this lends itself to Christians living lives for the temporal and not the eternal. One last thing. Thursday night, we started Nahum. Nahum - Capernaum. For those of you that went to Israel with us, his name — and that's the area he lived. That was where Jesus kind of set up his headquarters, where Peter's mom lived.

And we visited the site. Capernaum, Nahum is how you pronounce his name, means comfort, the home of comfort. And it's like God wants to settle us and comfort us by telling us before it happens what's going to happen so that when it happens, we're good. There's a Season 8, the number of new beginnings. But here's — and I shared this, just being open again. Sometimes we don't live like that. We don't make decisions in light of that.

So here's how I framed it on Thursday night in our study in Nahum. You're in the heat of the battle in the middle of the day. All the others — you fill in the rest of them. And you think, man, this is bad. And it's like the Holy Spirit has to just kind of (Knocking) “JD, what's wrong with you? What are you doing? Did you forget? Dude, you're saved.” “Oh, that's right!” Why are you sweating over the small stuff? Isn't there that saying, don't sweat the small stuff and everything is small stuff?

Well, in light of eternity it is. Don't forget how it ends. I think by forgetting how it ends, we allow ourselves to be duped by the devil. And that's one of his tactics. He doesn't want us to remember. Oh, yeah. Wait a minute. I'm saved. Well, why don't you live like it, then? Act like it then. You're acting like you're not. You're all fretting and worrying and sweating, and I'm running out of words.

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But I said I would close, so I will. David, come on up. Stand up. As abrupt as that was, we'll close in prayer and song. You might pray for me for more smoother and seamless closings, not so jarring and abrupt. You know, like, the end. Bye. Let's pray.

Father, I — (Frustrated sigh) You are so good. Thank You so much. God, this, even though we're not going to be here during the seven-year Tribulation, thank You for including this information about the seven-year Tribulation because there's so much to learn from it.

Thank You, Lord. Now we need the Holy Spirit to take it to the next level, bless it to our hearts and the application of it to our lives. Would You do that, please, Lord? Thank You, Lord. We love You so much. In Jesus' name, Amen.