

**Revelation 17**  
**God Can Make It Make Sense**  
**Pastor JD Farag**

KAPONO: Would you join me, bow your heads as we pray? Lord, we thank You. There is so much power in Your name, Lord. So we praise Your name, Jesus. We lift You up on high. Thank You for this time of worship, Lord. Thank You for Prophecy Update. We thank You for the more sure word of prophecy, Lord, that allows us to see what's going to take place, that we may look up and say, thank You Lord, for our blessed hope.

Now, Lord, would You teach us in Your word this morning? Be with Pastor JD, Lord. Continue to give him the strength that is needed to stand up and deliver Your word, Lord, Would You bless this time. Again, Lord, we thank You, and we praise Your name, Jesus. We say Amen.

PASTOR JD: Amen. Well, good morning and welcome. So glad you're here. You can be seated. Are you glad you're here?

[ Congregation says, "Yeah." ]

Okay. I just want to make sure.

[ Applause ]

Those of you joining us online, we want you to know that we're glad you are. And we want to welcome you as well. Before we jump in, though, I need to let you know about our upcoming prayer meeting this Tuesday, 7:00 p.m. here in the sanctuary. And we would — it'll start at 7:00 p.m.

Did I say that? Did I already say 7:00 p.m.? Okay, it's at 7:00 p.m. I'd really encourage you, though, to make plans if you're able to come and join with us. We would love to have you. The prayer nights are always such a rich blessing, and so I know you'll be blessed if you do.

We're going to finish *Chapter 17* today, and our text is going to be verses 7-18. It's kind of a longer text, so I would absolutely understand if you don't want to stand for the reading of God's Word. Where you're seated is fine. If you do want to stand to follow along, I'll ask you to do that at this time, beginning in *verse 7*, where John continues to write by the Spirit and says, *verse 7*, **“Then the angel said to me: “Why are you astonished? I will explain to you the mystery of the woman and of the beast she rides, which has the seven heads and ten horns. The beast, which you saw, once was, now is not, and yet will come up out of the**

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**Abyss and go to its destruction.** *[Well, that really explains it right there, doesn't it?] [Doesn't that help?]*

**The inhabitants of the earth whose names have not been written in the book of life from the creation of the world will be astonished when they see the beast because** *[Here it is again] it once was, now is not, and yet will come. [Verse 9] “This calls for a mind with wisdom. The seven heads are seven mountains on which the woman sits. [Or kingdoms or empires]*

**They are also seven kings.** *[And here we go again] Five have fallen, one is, the other has not yet come; but when he does come, he must remain for only a little while. The beast who once was, and now is not, is an eighth king. [How are you doing?]*

**He belongs to the seven and is going to his destruction. “The ten horns you saw are ten kings who have not yet received a kingdom, but who for one hour will receive authority as kings along with the beast. They have one purpose and will give their power and authority to the beast.**

**They will wage war** *[Verse 14] against the Lamb, but the Lamb will triumph over them because He is Lord of lords and King of kings— and with Him will be His called, chosen, and faithful followers.” [That's us!]*

**Then** *[Verse 15] the angel said to me, “The waters you saw, where the prostitute sits, are peoples, multitudes, nations, and languages. The beast [Verse 16] and the ten horns you saw will hate the prostitute. They will bring her to ruin and leave her naked; they will eat her flesh and burn her with fire. [That is way TMI]*

*[Verse 17] For God [Listen] has put it into their hearts to accomplish His purpose by agreeing to hand over to the beast their royal authority, until God’s words are fulfilled.*

*[Lastly, verse 18] The woman you saw is the great city [Speaking of Babylon] that rules over the kings of the earth.”*

Let's pray please. Father, we readily admit that its prophecies and passages like the one we just read that propel us to You for the wisdom this calls for in order to understand it. So that's what we're going to ask You for, Lord, is eyes of understanding, so we can see what it

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is that You want us to see and how it applies to us today. Speak to us what You want us to hear.

And Lord, minister to us, especially those who find themselves in hardship and difficulty and pain and suffering and trials and sorrows. Lord, let this be an encouragement, bringing hope, new hope. So Lord, will You, as only You can, do that which only You can, and make Your word which is alive, come to life in our lives? We pray in Jesus' name. Amen and amen. You can be seated. Thank you very much.

What a passage, huh? Well, what I want to do is talk with you about how it is that God is able to make what doesn't make any sense makes sense. Make sense? As we just read and are about to see, God has an angel explain to an astonished Apostle John the meaning of that which he saw in the first six verses. It's described as he writes.

I think astonished is an understatement. He sees a prostitute riding on a ten crowns, seven-headed scarlet beast on many waters, and he has no idea what it means. Can't make any sense out of it. So I love how God — and we're going to talk about this — in His love, in His grace, in His mercy has this angel explain it to him.

And he starts off by asking him, **“Why are you so astonished?”** I'll explain. I'll explain it to you. Yeah, but it doesn't make any sense. No, I'm going to make it make sense. And this is true for us today, especially in those times when the circumstances are so complex and perplexing, and at every turn it just seems to get worse and makes no sense. Be encouraged because God, in His time during that time, can make it make sense. You just have to wait, and it has to be on His terms.

And that's the problem right there, isn't it, if we're honest with ourselves; when we find ourselves in a perplexing situation; the circumstances are such that we just don't understand; we don't know the ways and the whys of God; they're too high for our understanding.

But God takes His time because He's doing something in the process of time. But the problem is, is that we're so focused on the end product, we rob ourselves of the richness of what God desires to do in the process. And in so doing, I think we cheapen the final product.

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No, God's doing a work, and God will, in His time, in His way, for His glory make whatever that is that doesn't make sense make sense.

Now, for those that were with us for today's Prophecy Update, you know that we took and tackled this tough text — did I get enough T's in there again — and focused on the prophetic information that's in this chapter. But today's sermon, as with our entire verse-by-verse study through Revelation, the focus is not on the prophetic information, but rather on the personal application.

In other words, what does God want me to take away from this? Because, I mean, at first read, you're reading this thing going, okay, wow, cool. What does that have to do with me when the alarm clock goes off tomorrow morning and off to work, I go tomorrow morning because hi ho, hi ho, it's off to work I go. Sorry. How does this apply to my life, my job, my career, my business, my family, my marriage?

Well, I found four. Whoa! I wasn't expecting that response. Okay, maybe you can find more, but four personal applications. Let me just qualify that. Indulge me. By personal application, I mean you take the word of God, you take heed to the word of God, and you apply it to your Christian life, especially in these last days, as we see the last hour fast approaching, which it is.

The first one is in *verses 7 and 8*, and it's simply that God is willing to explain mysteries. I realize this might seem like a firm grasp of the obvious, but somewhere along the line we've bought into this lie from the father of lies that somehow God is trying to figure out how to keep us from figuring it out, like He's playing this heavenly chess game. And you know, “God works in mysterious ways.”

I don't like that, by the way. Yes, His ways are unsearchable. Yes, there are mysteries that the finite could never comprehend because God is infinite. I get that, but what comes packaged with something like that is, well, what's the point? I want to know what God's will is for me in this. Maybe you're facing a decision. You're seeking the Lord. God, should — maybe you're praying for a job, and then God presents two. And you go back to the throne. God, which one of the two? I need to know.

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It's not like God's up there going, no, you figure it out. No, just... you know... Can you imagine that? I mean, I just picture this. Let me have this. Just picture this in your mind. I'll use myself. I'll take one for the team. I'll use myself as an example.

God's up there watching me, looking down on me. "Oh, my goodness. JD almost figured it out. Quick, get down there! Move the players around the chessboard so it messes him up. Can't have him figuring out My will, My way, My plan."

No. He's willing. He's — in fact, God wants you in His will more than even you yourself want to be in His will. And He will always create an environment in our lives that's conducive to us walking in His path. He can't not because to do so He would be party to our disobedience, and that's inconsistent with the character and nature of who God is. So He's never going to set us up for a fall. He's always going to set us up for obedience.

Now, we got a problem here because John is just bewildered, astonished, totally puzzled. And here comes this angel sent by God. And the angel says, in effect, John, you don't have to be so puzzled, so astonished. I'm going to explain the mystery to you. I'm going to explain everything. Really? You're going to explain what the woman represents? Yeah. What the beast represents? Yeah. The seven heads and ten horns? Yeah. Okay.

Question. Why? What do you mean? Why would God send an angel to John to explain the mystery? Answer in a word: Love. And I think that's why we have *verses 7 and 8* in our Bibles. It's because God loves us so much. He doesn't want us in the dark. He's not going to keep us in the dark. We're children of the light. You have a situation that you need to have God's light shed on. What, God's not going to do that? He's willing to do that.

Well, how does He do that? Chiefly through His word. This is probably as good of a time as any. I hope you don't tire of this illustration, but this is the four legs on the table of knowing God's will: God's word, God's peace, God's providence, and God's confirmation. And they all work in tandem in concert, one with the other. None of them are standalone. Let me explain.

First of all, you know it's not God's will if it's not compatible with God's word because God will never contradict His Word. "Well, you know, I just, you know, really feel like that, you know, I just feel like God showed me this."

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And you're going, "You're kidding me, right?"

I'll let you fill in the blank because whenever I get specific, I get in trouble. So I don't want to get in trouble, so I won't even look at you right now. I'll just look at my Bible.

So wait a minute. So you're saying that you're doing this because God showed you this?

You've heard that expression: How can something that feels so good be so wrong? Oh,

**"...wide is the gate that leads to destruction, and many that go thereof. But narrow is the gate that leads to life, and few go thereof."**

Remember that advertising campaign? I haven't seen it in a while. I mean, maybe it ran its course, and that's a good thing. But you know they have this advertising campaign of "50,000 people can't be wrong," the inference being that 50,000 people use this product or service. And how can that many people be wrong? Easy. In fact, if 50,000 people agree, it's probably wrong because **"...narrow is the way that leads to life, and few thereof go."**

You're going against the flow. And nobody likes to be the only one, right? Am I right?

You know those experiments and research studies, they've done? This was many years ago in the classroom with young children. And everybody but one child is in on the experiment. And the experiment is to reveal the power of peer pressure.

So there's many variations of this, but I'll just keep it simple. So the teacher's instructed to write on the chalkboard two plus two equals five. I know some of you are having 'Brave New World' flashbacks. That's fine. Two plus two equals five. If this is correct, raise your hand. And everybody but the one student raises their hand. Do I have sweat stains?

[ Laughter ]

Finally, after the crushing pressure to not be the only one, the one on whom the experiment is done sheepishly raises his hand when he knows that's not right. Two plus two equals four. But he doesn't want to be — and oh, and all the other classmates, all of his peers, all of his friends are looking at him, like, you're the only one. And then finally, you just cower and acquiesce to the pressure.

Now, why do I go into an illustration like that? Because we do that. We do that. Listen, God has the final word, and God will have the final word, and God is willing to explain His word to

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you. He doesn't want to — how many times in the epistles do you read Paul write, “...brethren, I don't want you to be ignorant.” Did you just call me ignorant? I don't — how about this one? Jesus, out of the mouth of the Savior himself, key word, “**Let no man deceive you...**” Translated: We let ourselves be deceived. Don't let them get away with that.

So here you are. You're in a perplexing situation. You don't know what's going on. You can't make any sense out of it. And here's God who loves you so much. And He goes, chiefly through His word, and then it's the word of God, and then secondly, the peace of God that surpasses human understanding.

Transcends is actually a better word because it's like God saying, I have to go over your head because your head's going to try to logically make sense out of it, but I'm going to make sense out of it in your heart. So it surpasses your intellect, the head; goes straight to the heart, and keeps your heart and mind at peace in Christ Jesus. It's the peace of God from the God of peace. And you know this peace. Let me flip it around.

Sometimes there's just something, doesn't quite feel quite right. Don't go against that. God's putting a check in your spirit. It may not be a “no.” It may be a “slow.” It may be a “wait.” And no, yellow lights do not mean speed up. They mean slow down and prepare to stop. As one quipped so aptly, “When God says — when we pray, and God says no, it's because we need to grow.

Maybe we're wrong. Maybe the request is wrong. Maybe the timing is wrong. But if I'm right, the request is right and the timing is right, God says go. Here you go. So there's that peace, and it's just good between me and the Holy Spirit. This is the way; walk ye in it. And it's an inexplicable peace because you can't logically explain it. You just know that God is giving you a peace about it.

Husbands, a word of advice. And I got to be careful here too. So again, I won't look at anybody. And wives, don't elbow your husbands. She's your help meet. O would to God that I would have listened to my wife when she said, “I don't feel a peace about this.”

I'm like, “What are you talking about? You don't feel a peace about it? It's a no-brainer.”

To which she would respond, “well, why don't you pray about it?”

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“Okay.”

So then I pray, and then all of a sudden, I got a check in my spirit. I'm getting a “wait.” Something's not right. True story. This happened in a career decision. I mean, the sign-up bonus just to walk in the front door. The contract: two years. The pay: whew! No brainer. And my wife says, “Did you pray about it?”

“Pfff!” Just like that. “Pfff!” Like how I do that? I got it down pretty good, “Pfff!” Did I pray about it? No!

“Why don't you pray about it?”

Okay, so here's my prayer, right? I'm like, “God, thank You for opening this door. I know this is the way and I'm to walk in it. Show my wife. Give her a peace about it.”

Well, wrong prayers never get right answers, just like wrong questions never do. So I prayed, and that uneasiness grew, and the peace flew from me. And then I finally declined this once-in-a-lifetime, envy-of-all-of-my-colleagues-and-associates offer.

And they headhunted a guy out of California. This was back when I was on the mainland. He lasted six months, ended up in a lawsuit for breach of contract, had to pay every penny back. They headhunted another guy. He comes in; he makes it six or seven months. Same exact thing.

So I went to my wife. “I love you; I love you. Thank you. What else don't you feel a peace about?” I'm going somewhere with this. Just bear with me. I'm taking you on the scenic route.

The third one is God's providence. Now, this is where discernment is a must. Because here, we flippantly sometimes refer to it as “well, God opens up a door and God closes the door.” And we — you know, it's so cliché. God's not going to ever close a door without opening up a better one. (Chuckling) I better stop. Quit while I'm ahead, assuming I'm ahead.

Okay, so I've got the word of God, the peace of God. Now I need the providence of God, meaning God's going to start opening and closing doors. Now, here's where it gets kind of tricky, for lack of a better word because sometimes God may not use a door. He may want

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to use a window. He may not use ether. So it's going to all line up according to the word of God and the peace of God, the providence of God.

Now here's the fourth and final leg in that table. It's that confirmation, that word fitly spoken. And it usually doesn't come from pulpit to pew, from me to you. Actually, a lot of ministry takes place here between you and you. You don't need me. I don't even need to be here.

No, it's that brother or sister in Christ that comes to you and puts their arm around you and gives you a hug and wants to encourage you, and says, you know, you've been heavy on my heart this last week, and I just want to encourage you. And then they quote a scripture and unbeknownst to them, that's the very scripture you asked God about. And God's using that brother or sister to confirm it for you.

You know, sometimes we wait on the Lord. How about those times when the Lord's waiting on us? I mean, what else do you need? You got My word, My peace, My providence. I've confirmed it in the presence of two or more witnesses. I've established it. I've confirmed it. What are you waiting for? Well, how does that tie into this? I'm just going to come back to, in a word, love.

Why do you think it is that God, in those times when nothing makes any sense at the time, does it in His time? Because He loves you. He loves you. He's going to explain it to you in His time, not on your calendar. And we're good at that, by the way. Have you done this, where you let God know what your schedule is for the week, you know, and kind of this is deadline driven, Lord, you know, I just... Like God's in heaven going, "I had no idea. Well, let me get on it."

No. God lives outside of time. He's the god of time He's not subject to time, so in His time. I love the writer of Ecclesiastes, Solomon, by the Spirit, writes, "**He makes all things beautiful in His time.**" His time, not my time. You know what my time is? It's always right now. That's my time. And God says, no, actually, truth be made known, you don't want Me to do it in your time because if I — I'm never late, but I'm never early, and you don't want Me to be. Because if I'm early, then you're going to be robbed of all that I wanted to show you during that process of time.

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*Isaiah 30:18*, and we'll move on to the second one. I didn't intend to spend that much time, but maybe that's for somebody here today or watching online. *Isaiah 30:18*, Isaiah, by the Spirit, writes, **“The Lord will wait to be gracious unto you.”**

See, I don't like that verse. I would have much rather that Isaiah, by the Spirit wrote God will hurry to be gracious unto you. No, God is going to wait. He's going to take His time and do it in His time. And His time is always perfect. And when you're on the tail end of that, and you look back on that, we say hindsight is 20/20.

I love this illustration. You know the people who say, “When I get to heaven, I'm going to ask God, blah, blah, blah, blah.” No, you're not. Here's what's going to happen. Well, first of all, you're going to cast your crowns and worship Him, for He is worthy, but you are just going to be in awe. Holy, holy, holy is the Lord God Almighty.

And then the reason why you're not going to ask any questions is because, no need now. This is what your expression is going to be. Oh! (Chuckling) Oh my God! That was — that's perfect. You know that saying, “I wish I would've known then what I know now.” God, that's — You're amazing. I know because I'm God. That's beautiful. I know because I make all things beautiful in my time.

And then I picture — I'll take it one step further. Let me have it. I picture God saying, “JD, come here. I heard you had some questions.” “I'm good, I'm good. I'm good now. No need. Now I see.”

Before we move on to *verses 9-11*, on the second one, please, please take this home with you. From *verses 7 and 8*, God is not reluctant. God is more than willing. God is able. He wants to explain to you what makes no sense to you. The second one is in *verses 9-11*, and it's that God has promised us His wisdom. You know, in *verse 9* we see a familiar parallel to *Revelation 13:18*, in the context of the mark of the beast. **“This calls for wisdom.”**

Only this time it's not the number of the name of the man that calls for wisdom. It's the seven mountains that calls for wisdom. What's wisdom? Wisdom is the beginning of knowledge. Wisdom is the fear of the Lord. Wisdom is the birthing of humility. I'm quoting basically from the Proverbs. But wisdom is the application of information.

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See, I could just stand up here and just spout all this information. And then say, “Have a nice day,” and off you go. Wow, wasn't that informative. No. He's so knowledgeable. (Said like an old woman) He's so informative. (Said like an old woman) *[Emphasis added]*

Well, that's what knowledge is. It's just information. Wisdom is the application of that information. That's what I mean by applying it to our lives. Remember the parable Jesus taught *Matthew 7* about the two builders?

Apparently, they went to the same church. They're both building a house. They had a building project at the same time. The only difference was one built his house on the sand, while the other built his house on the rock. And when, not if, when the storm hit the guy who built his house on the sand, it came crashing down and great was its fall. What was the difference between the guys?

Apparently, they went to the same church, had the same teachings, the same sermons. They lived in the same area. They're building the, you know, a house the same. But what's the difference between the sand and the rock? Of course, the rock is Christ, and Jesus is very clear and delineating between the two when He says the man who built his house on the rock is the man that put the word to practice.

Translated: He applied it to his life. The other guy heard the word, but like James says, he wasn't a doer of the word. James also said, **“If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God.”** What's He going to say, no? No, He'll give you wisdom, and He'll give it liberally, generously, abundantly. And He won't change His mind. There's no shifting of shadows.

And the only reason you don't have it is because you asked not for it. You have not because you ask not. How many times have you been in a situation where you've needed the wisdom of God? I mean, you need God's wisdom from above, which James says is first pure — this is a grid, a template — peaceable, gentle, easy to be entreated, full of mercy, and good fruits, without hypocrisy or partiality, bearing fruit unto righteousness.

That's the wisdom from above, as opposed, in contrast to worldly wisdom that's all about self, pleasure, lust, worldly things. That's worldly wisdom. There's the wisdom from the world, and there's a wisdom from above. And James gives us in detail how to distinguish and discern between the two. It's a promise. Let's talk about this for a moment.

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We say in our day, "I give you my word." Well, God has given me His word. Now I because I'm fallen, and so are you, so don't get spiritual on me. I can go back on my word. God can't. What are you saying, Pastor? I'm saying that God has given you His word. He can't go back on it. If you will but ask Him for wisdom, He will give it to you to the point where you say, "Okay, I don't need anymore."

You know what's of particular interest, noteworthy? That this call for wisdom is in the context of the seven mountains of the beast upon which the whore sits, and rides. Now, why do I point that out? Well, think this through with me and just bear with me. Okay?

We're living in an evil day and an evil time, and the days are growing darker with each passing day as we near that great and final day. And the graphic, horrific nature with which this description is recorded in John's writing according to God's command, and then the subsequent explanation of it that ensues. That should give us pause. And if anything, it should propel us.

Because isn't that true, if we're honest with ourselves, when we don't know, that's when we go to the One who does? We, again, cliché, we don't know what the future holds, but we know who holds the future. That's true. When was the last time you talked to Him about it? When was the last time you asked Him for wisdom?

You know, have you ever thought of it that maybe God will allow a situation or a set of circumstances into your life, if for no other reason other than that He hasn't heard from you for a while? You know, I just haven't — I take one for the team again, being the godly, humble man that I am.

"You know, I haven't heard from JD in a while. The only time he calls me is when he needs something. Why don't you get down there, so that... Because I just want — I haven't heard from him. And if the only time he's going to call me is when he needs something, then go down there and make him need something, okay? Make him need wisdom for a situation."

Do you ever think that maybe God's behind it because He's waiting by — and you never get voicemail? And you never have to wait for the three dots if you text because He's been expecting you. He loves you. He wants to hear from you. He wants to provide wisdom to you. And it's there for the asking. Oh, I shudder to think of all of the times that the wisdom

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from above was there for the asking, and I availed not of it. And that could have been such a game changer in retrospect.

Now God's gracious. But this calls for wisdom. If this was the seven hills, not mountains — it's mountains, not hills, of Rome — what wisdom would be required to figure that out? No, you got a perplexing situation that makes no sense, that you're trying to figure out on your own. And God saying, “Hello, hello. I have the wisdom. I can explain it. This calls for wisdom. Call on Me. Ask Me. I'll give to you what you need.”

How many decisions have we made using worldly wisdom instead of the wisdom of God? And to know that God will not only give it to you, but I mean, He'll just pour it, lavish it on you. Just ask.

I don't have to fill out any forms?

No.

I don't have to agree to the terms of service that nobody reads anyway?

No.

What do I have to do?

Just ask.

Well, why do I need to ask? God already knows.

No, wait a minute. We use that in the context of prayer to our own peril, I might add. Why do we need to pray when God already knows? Oh, prayer changes the pray-er. Prayer changes things. Yes, it did. Does. But there's something about the process of asking God. And when you do, be specific, not generic because generic prayers and requests get generic answers.

Conversely, specific prayers and requests get specific answers. I think sometimes God wants us, and James says it in *Chapter 5:16*, “**...the effectual, fervent [Specific] prayer of a righteous man [Not self-righteous, righteous in Christ] accomplishes much.**”

Oh, for those of you that come to our prayer meetings on Tuesday night, we see this. We know this. We rejoice in this. Answered prayer: I prayed, I asked. God gave me wisdom,

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supernatural wisdom. Just like it's a supernatural peace, it's a supernatural wisdom. It defies logic.

And oftentimes, it will go against the flow, be diametrically opposed to conventional wisdom. You know conventional wisdom? Well, God's not conventional. God's supernatural. You can have your conventional wisdom. I'm going to go with God's supernatural wisdom from above.

The third one is found in *verses 12-14*, and I'm going to word it this way for a reason, and I'll explain. God did call us to be triumphant. If you were to ask me what I thought was one of the lost jewels in the last days church, this would definitely have to be somewhere at the top of the list.

Paul would say it like this: You're not just a conqueror, you're more than conquerors. Wow. You're a conqueror. I'm more than you because I'm more than a conqueror. That didn't come off right. **“Greater is He that is in us than he is in the world.”** You are more than a conqueror.

You know that the details in *verses 12-14*, when the angel continues explaining to John the meaning of the ten horns as ten kings who give their power to the Antichrist's kingdom, he parenthetically — it's like a parentheses within a parentheses, parenthetically, includes how that they, speaking of the ten kings of this Antichrist kingdom, wage war against the Lamb. Big mistake.

But the Lamb, with us, His called followers, triumph. Now stay with me. At the pre-Tribulation rapture of the church before the 7-year Tribulation, which isn't for the church, Jesus comes for us. John's explaining the Antichrist's kingdom during the 7-year Tribulation, and he kind of inserts the Second Coming, the triumphant Second Coming. And this time, He's not coming as a suffering Savior. He's coming as King of kings and Lord of lords. And guess what? His bride is by His side. Let that sink in. At the rapture, He comes for us. At the Second Coming, He comes with us.

When John is explained by this angel, what these ten kings and this kingdom of the Antichrist means, he's wanting to let John know, so he has new hope. He tells him how it ends. Because if I'm John and I saw this stuff, that would mess me up, even the explanation

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of it. I mean, just seeing a whore sitting on a scarlet beast with seven heads and ten horns, man, you'd think you'd seen it all. That alone is....

God, what does this mean? It's not good. No, it's not because full of blasphemous names. So what's God doing here? He's reminding John of what we need to be reminded of. We are triumphant. We are the called.

You know, we're so quick to quote *Romans 8:28*, but in so doing, we misquote it. And we leave out a simple word, “the,” and it changes the whole complexion of the promise. We love the *Romans 8:28* but we stop at 28, and we don't go to 29 for a reason because that explains 28. But **“For we know that God works all things together for the good, for [The called] those who love God and the called according to His purpose.”**

That's going to come clearer into focus here in a moment. But before we get to this last one, this fourth and final one, in *verses 15-18*, please, I implore you, take this home with you.

You're the called. You're already victorious and triumphant. And the enemy doesn't want you to know that. He wants you to forget that. When we come back with Him, 10,000 by His side, it's a Hebrew idiom describing countless multitudes of “the called” who come with Him and are triumphant when this Antichrist kingdom with its kings wage war.

And notice: it says, **“...against the Lamb.”** Why doesn't it say against Jesus? No, against the Lamb. Because that's how we're going to behold him, as the Lamb that was slain before the foundations of the earth. He's called a lamb for a reason.

And we're going to — we are going to triumph because we are the called. And I don't think we live like it. I'll just be open with you and say that there are many times during my day where I act like I'm not already triumphant.

I mean, we have the benefit of knowing how this ends. And spoiler alert, it ends very well for us in the end. But the question is, do we really live like that? Here we're fretting over the increase in the rent, which we don't have. And there's the enemy right there to feed in and foster this fear.

But God's not given you a spirit of fear, but of power and of love and of a disciplined mind, is a better translation. Like we discipline our children, discipline your mind. Give your mind a spanking sometimes because it needs one because you need to take every thought captive

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into the obedience of Christ. If a thought comes, you catch it, and you make sure it's compatible and obedient to the words of Christ. And if it's not, you don't let it in. Resist the devil, and he will flee.

And by the way, you're not working for victory. You're working from victory. You're already victorious. The victory has already been won. Oh, you mean there's nothing else I have to do? No. It's already been done. **"It is finished."** Aren't you glad God didn't say it is finished, comma, I need your help. No, it is finished, period.

This last one, and it's like the best for last, the icing on the cake, as we say, in *verses 15-18*. Now listen; again, I'm wording it this way for a reason. God will fulfill His purpose and word. And here's how I get there. When the angel concludes his explanation with the whore sitting on the waters, representing peoples, multitudes, nations, and tongues, and then the angel tells John that the beast turns on and burns up the whore, I mean, it's pretty graphic. I'll leave out the eating of the flesh part, which I just added in, but it's there.

But we're told why and how. And get this. Why did they do that? And how did they do that? Because God put it in their hearts to do that. Whoa! Why did God put it in their hearts to do that? Because it would accomplish and fulfill His word. Okay. God can use anyone or anything to do anything for anyone. Is He limited? Is His arm too short that He cannot save? Is there anything too hard for the Lord? He's the God of the impossible.

In fact, actually, He is not the God of the possible if it's still possible for you to do because it's hands off to God. "No, I got this."

God's like, "Okay, I'll be waiting here on standby after you come back because you will. And it'll be much worse when you do."

No, no, God is able to do the impossible because He's the God of the impossible. And sometimes it has to come to that place where it is impossible before we even go to the Lord with it. We throw up our hands and we say, "Oh God, I can't do this. It's impossible!"

And God goes, "Cool, I can watch Me now. And by the way, JD, [*Again, I'm taking one for the team*] it's about time. What is it about you? You could have saved yourself so much needless and unnecessary suffering and grief had you but come to Me earlier because you're the called according to My purpose, I'm going to fulfill My word to you, which I can't go back

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on. And I'm going to fulfill My purpose for you. I'm going to work it out for you. But apparently, you've been just trying to do it in the energy of your own flesh, your own strength, your own savvy, your own wisdom, your own smarts. I'll just wait."

He's patient. He's long suffering. He's forbearing. But when it's all said and done, God's word will be fulfilled. Can I just ask you? It's a rhetorical question. Can you find one place in the word of God where God failed? One time. How about in your life?

Oh, you thought He did because He didn't do it fast enough when you wanted Him to in the way that you expected Him to. So in your mind, you're thinking, "He failed me." God's going, "I never fail. I will never fail you. No one who puts their trust in Me will ever be disappointed. I'll never fail you."

But you set Me up for a failure that I have not failed. Is that — that didn't work, did it?

Here's what I want to close with. God knows whatever it is that you're going through. And He will always, without exception, without question, work it out and fulfill His word and accomplish His purpose.

One last thing. You know *verse 29*, that we don't like to quote, after *Romans 8:28*, "**...the called according to His purpose.**" *Romans 8:29* tells you what the purpose is. To conform you into the image of Christ. That's His purpose? Yeah. Well, that explains a lot. Now it makes sense. His purpose is to make me more like Jesus. What was Jesus like? *Galatians 5*. Love, joy, peace, gentle, goodness, meekness, kindness. That's a sermon unto itself. We're so unkind. Patience and self-control.

He's — *Romans 12:1-2*, "**Don't be conformed to the pattern of this world but be transformed by the renewing of your mind with the washing of the water of God's word.**"

That's His perfect will, His purpose, His plan: to make you more like Jesus, more Christlike, more loving, kinder. I was going to say, "more kind." Does that work? Thank you. Okay, I said I'd close.

So that's the end. Kaponon, come on up. And stand up, and we'll close in prayer and song. I'm not getting any better on the abrupt closings, right? If only your pastor was smooth and had these seamless....

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Father, thank You for Your love, Your grace, Your mercy, Your wisdom. The list is just endless really. But Lord, I know that in the hearing of my closing prayer, there are many who are in exactly this place. They're stunned, astonished, perplexed, confused even. And we know that You're not the author of confusion. And nothing makes any sense at all. And it seems like the more they pray, the worse it gets.

Lord, would You please rush in and show up as You're always so faithful to and encourage and strengthen and renew hope? Lord, thank You that we can trust in You, wait on You, ask of You for anything, and if it's according to Your will and fulfills Your purpose, we can have that which we ask for. Forgive us for asking, not.

And Lord, lift up the downcast. Those who are discouraged, encourage them, Lord. Those who are weary, strengthen them, reinvigorate them, remind them that they're already victorious. Thank You, Lord, for this pretty graphic but much-needed passage here in Your word. In Jesus' name. Amen.