

Revelation 20
My Pain In This Life Ends With My Reign In Eternal Life
Pastor JD

KAPONO: Would you join me as we pray? Lord, it is a happy day. Lord, we are here in this Your church, Lord, in this beautiful place that You have blessed us with, Lord, to learn Your word. So Holy Spirit, would You help us to understand what it is that You have for us this morning, Lord? And I pray that we would all be blessed, Lord, and be different because we are living in Your word, Lord, and living out Your word in our lives, Lord.

So would You bless our time together? Lord, give Pastor JD the strength and the voice to continue to do Your will and preach Your word. Lord, we ask this in Your name. We pray, Jesus, we say Amen.

(Audio not turned on for Pastor JD)

PASTOR JD: Good morning. Oh, there we go. You can be seated. Welcome. So glad you're here. Those of you online, we want to welcome you as well. And I want to begin, though, first, by mentioning a couple of things, the first of which is a shout out to all the fathers, of which I am one, on this day that we celebrate as Father's Day.

However, instead of wishing fathers a Happy Father's Day — by the way, O Happy Day, I don't know what it is, but I love that song. No, I — is it just me? No, man, how do you not just — O happy day! (Yelling) Okay, I feel better now. I got it out of my system. But it's a happy day when Jesus washed my sins away.

But instead of wishing fathers a happy Father's Day, I want to wish all the fathers many blessing and to have a blessed Father's Day. Do you know the difference? Is that okay? Did I mess you up? I'm going to mess you up more now. This is perhaps more importantly. I also think we should celebrate and commemorate our Heavenly Father who loves us so much that He would send His only begotten Son, Jesus, God the Son, the Son of God, to provide the only way to salvation. I hope you're mindful of our Heavenly Father on this day that we celebrate Father's Day.

Secondly, I want to let you know that I've invited Dr. J.B. Hixson to join me here on stage, also online. It will be livestreamed in its entirety starting at 7:00, not 7:30, 7:00 p.m. and that is Hawaii time this upcoming Thursday, which is June 19th.

Now, I know what you're asking because it can read your minds. Who's J.B.? Any relation to JD? I don't see any resemblance, so I don't think so. He's a pastor, professor, speaker,

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author, and the founder of Not By Works Ministries. And I've had the privilege of meeting and getting to know both he and his wife, Wendy, over the last several months and am really looking forward to what the Lord has for all of us as we discuss Bible prophecy, which the two of us share a common passion for. The discussion will be topic specific to how now, more than ever, Bible prophecy is perfectly lining up and heating up.

Now, as only the Lord can, and I love God's timing because last Thursday we finished in our midweek Bible study, the entire Book of Haggai, yeah, all two chapters of it. So the next book is, wow, Zachariah, second-to-the-last book in the Old Testament. 14 chapters. Perfect timing.

And that was the date. And I know that the Lord orchestrated it and even more so the title of it because it was about two weeks ago that we planned the topics that we were going to discuss and also the title of the discussion two weeks before everything hit Thursday night, our time in Hawaii, early Friday morning in Israel and Iran. But do you know what the number 1 topic was going to be and is going to be on our list? Israel.

And do you know what the number 2 topic on our list is going to be? Ezekiel 38. I just love it when God does that. I mean, He goes before you and He times everything perfectly because that's just who and how He is. We talked about this in our Prophecy Update. I'm not going to — I would encourage those of you who were not here for it or have not watched it or viewed it yet to do so because this title for Thursday night is really an understatement, as was really the title for the Prophecy Update. 'It's Now Going Down. Soon We're Going Up,' and I mean soon and very soon.

(Singing 🎵 'O Happy Day' 🎵)

See, you got that stuck in my mind for the rest of the day, which is fine, I'll take it. All right, let's get into the Word. Revelation *Chapter 20*. We got to and through *verse 3* last week. We're going to pick it up in *verse 4* and make it all the way to *verse 6*. Three verses at a time. We're just not gonna hurry. What's the rush? So if you're not able, please, no worries. Just if you want to stand, you can follow along as I read our text.

Beginning in *verse 4*, John, by the Holy Spirit, is writing that which he saw, which was commanded of him to write. And he says, *verse 4*, **"I saw thrones on which were seated**

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those who had been given authority to judge. And I saw the souls of those who had been beheaded because of their testimony about Jesus and because of the word of God. They had not worshiped the beast or its image and had not received its mark on their foreheads or their hands. They came to life and reigned with Christ a thousand years.

[Verse 5] **(The rest of the dead did not come to life until the thousand years were ended.) This is the first resurrection. Blessed *[Verse 6]* and holy are those who share in the first resurrection. The second death has no power over them, but they will be priests of God and of Christ and will reign with Him for a thousand years."**

Let's do it. Let's get this show on the road. Actually, let's pray. Father, thank You so, so, so much for Your word. How alive Your word is and active, sharper than any two-edged sword, Your word is. How applicable it is. How personal it is. How you speak in and through it to the matters of our hearts in such a way that it's unmistakably You because only You know that about us.

So Lord, we need for You to do that for us today. Will You? I mean, this is a glorious and wondrous text that's before us today. But we don't want to just hear Your word. We want to take heed to Your word, be doers of Your word. So would You very specifically and clearly, so clearly that a fool cannot err thereof, speak? Your servants are listening. We pray in Jesus' name. Amen and amen. You can be seated. Thank you.

So what I want to talk with you about today is how that all of my pain in this life will give way and lead to and even end with my reign with Jesus Christ in eternal life. I'm not trying to be clever with the titles. It's not me any way. I pray and wait on the Lord, inquire of the Lord. But I do so keenly aware of many who are experiencing pain, suffering, hardships, difficulty. In whatever arena of life it's in, you're really hurting. Well, the text before us today is one of hope and encouragement.

And here's why. It's about what the Lord has gloriously and eternally planned for us, specific to the Kingdom Age, the 1000-year Millennial Reign. And I don't know if you caught it as I was reading it, but it kind of sounds to me a lot like we're going to be judges. I don't know about the robes, but judges. Crowns? Yes. Robes? You know, I don't know. But we're going to have authority to judge and rule and reign with Christ on His throne.

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Wrap your mind around that. Please, I only point that out because we're all prone, and we're going to see this in a moment, but — and I'll take ownership of this myself. I'm just as guilty as the next guy when I read a passage, a text like this, let alone prepare to teach a text like this, right? I mean, I gotta own it before I can teach it. I cannot impart that which I do not possess.

So I can assure you I own this one because it's a much-needed reminder for me and you of how temporary that pain in your life is. And it does it by way of how eternal your life with Christ will be forever. I mean, that should be a game changer. That should be a life changer.

And I don't say that, you know — that's cliché, I realize, but I think it's incumbent upon me before we tackle the text to first preface this teaching with what I'll call parallel promises, in order that we might have a better understanding of the powerful and profound promise in the text that I just read. I'm going to start with my favorite chapter. Actually it is. This is actually true. Not that what I say is not true, but I actually — this is my favorite chapter in all the Bible.

It is *Romans 8*. Right out of the chute, *verse 1*, **“There is therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus.”**

No guilt, no shame, no condemnation. You are not condemned. You have been saved. You have been set free. “And whom the Son has set free is free indeed.” The whole chapter. And listen, I'm going to just parenthetically insert this. If you're ever struggling or doubting concerning God's love for you, I would really highly encourage you to, not just read it, spend some time in it and meditate on it, the entire chapter of *Romans 8*. Why? Because there is no one or no thing that can separate you from the love that God has for you. Oh, and how about let's not forget *Romans 8:28*. We all have *Romans 8:28* memorized in seven different languages. **“For we know that God works all things together for the good to those that are the called according to His purpose.”**

Oh, we love that. But we stop there. We need to read the terms of agreement, the terms of service, the fine print, you know, that none of us read when we're agreeing to something online. It's a horrible comparison but let me have it. Wait a minute. Okay. He loves me. He's going to work every — He's going to take — wait. He can do that?

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Oh, you better believe it. Is there anything too hard for the Lord? Yeah, He can take bad and make good. How's he going to do that? I don't know how. I don't know when, but I do, by faith, know that He will because He said He would. But we got a little bit of an issue with what is the “called according to His purpose” mean?

Oh, that's the next verse. That's the next verse. His purpose is to make you, to shape you, to mold you to be more like Jesus. Well, that explains it because Jesus was love, not is love — doesn't just have love. He is love, joy, peace, gentleness, meekness, patience, and self-control. So that's the purpose? That's the reason for that trial of my life? Yeah.

Isaiah said like this. **“I chose the furnace of affliction to refine you.”** Is there any other choice that I could have to be refined? No. Not the beaches of Oahu to refine me? No, the furnace of affliction. That's what refines you. And that's what I've chosen to refine you. That's why that fiery trial is in your life, to make you more like Jesus.

And don't worry. He's not going to torch you, burn you, harm you because *Jeremiah 29:11* — I hope I'm getting that right — a life verse for many. God declares through the prophet: My plans, you know, I know My plans, the plans that I have for you. Not to harm you, but to give you hope and a future to prosper you, to bless you. I love you, man. I don't want to hurt you. This is why it is that I think we do err greatly when we ask God “why” instead of “what.”

Let me explain. You're going through the trial of your life. I mean, this has got to be how it ends. I don't see God getting me out of this one. I've been there, and you might be there right now. But God, as only He can, He takes that trial — and James hits it just, I mean, in your face. You can't blame the guy. He was the half-brother, biologically, of the savior of the world, grew up in the bedroom next to Him, and probably was always compared with Him. “Why can't you keep your room clean like your brother?” “Um. I'm not God incarnate, maybe. I'm not perfect, sinless, flawless, without blemish.”

So that's — I'm defending James, by the way. Because it's not a book you read. It's a book you endure. Because he says, “Consider it pure joy when you encounter trials of various kinds.” Are you kidding me right now? What does it say in the original? Certainly, this is a poor translation from the original because I consider it pure hell when I encounter various,

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you know, trials. No. Consider it pure joy. But he doesn't stop there. He says, knowing, knowing that God is producing patient endurance.

Oh, you don't remember praying for that? Well, it's like this. I'll just speak for myself. These are dangerous prayers. "God, make me a man of prayer." Oh, no, he didn't. Oh, yes, he did. So God dispatches the angels given charge concerning me with the assignment to make me a man of prayer. Here comes the trial. Isn't that when I pray? No, seriously, when things are going good, what's your prayer life look like, sound like? "Lord, bless them, bless this, bless that, bless me. In Jesus' name, Amen." The trial hits. Adversity strikes. "Oh God!"

You'll forgive my illustration, but I just picture God and the whole heavenly host going, "Wow, it worked." "I told you it would." "Man, You really got his attention now." "I know." We're seeing that Thursday night — we saw that Thursday nights. God will do everything and stop at nothing to get our attention. Why? Because He loves us. He loves us.

Romans 8:18. "Wow, were you ever going to get to this verse?" "I am right now. What's the rush?" **"For I consider [Reckon, reconcile, concluded] that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared [Not even close to being worthy to be compared] with the glory which shall be revealed in us,"** the glory that John just wrote for us.

John 16:33. This is Jesus speaking. **"I have told you these things, [This is John 16:33] so that in Me you may have peace. [And here's why] In this world you will have trouble."**

I wish He would have said you might have trouble, possibly there's a chance, maybe, you know. No, you will have trouble.

"But [Here it is] take heart! [Cheer up] [Be of good cheer because] I have overcome the world." Hang on to **"overcome."**

Revelation 3:21, **"To him who overcomes I will grant to sit with Me on My throne, as I also overcame and sat down with My Father on His throne."** Now because I can read your minds, I know what you're asking. Who is an overcomer? *1 John 5:4-5,* **"...for everyone born of God overcomes the world. This is the victory that has overcome the world, even our faith. [Question] [Verse 5] Who is it that overcomes the world? [Answer] Only he who believes that Jesus is the Son of God,"** believing in, putting your trust in Jesus the Christ for the forgiveness of sin.

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When you put your trust in Him, He puts the Holy Spirit in us. The disciples had Jesus with them. And He tells them, I have to go, and you want Me to go, by the way. Because unless I go, I cannot send you the Holy Spirit. Because not only will you have Me with you, the Holy Spirit will be in you, still with you, but now in you, and even upon you. That's who the overcomer is.

Well, that was my introduction. Everybody okay? All right. That wasn't very convincing, but we'll take it. The first reason to be encouraged, to have hope if you're one who is going through pain in this life, you can look forward to — I believe sooner than we think, with the way things are going, by the way. The pain in this life is going to end with the reign in eternal life.

Now watch this in *verse 4*. John is writing that we're going to be both judge and priest. He writes that he saw seated on the thrones the church; remember, from previous studies? And in addition, also the beheaded Tribulation saints, as we affectionately refer to them, who are given authority to judge. And that's not all. Sorry if that sounded like an infomercial.

This is going to be for 1000 years on Earth, and Earth will be like it was before sin entered the world. I'm giving you a lot to wrap your mind around. I again, I'll speak for myself. I still am having — because in the finite, how can you comprehend the infinite? Wait. For a thousand years? And earth is going to be like it was when the Garden of Eden was? “Woah! Sign me up.” “You’re already signed up in His blood.”

And I'm not only going to be in this earth as it was before sin entered, but I'm going to rule as a judge and a priest. And it's going to be for 1,000 years, which, by the way, is mentioned six times in just the first ten verses of this chapter, completing the final 7,000-year period.

Now, why do I say that that way? Because remember what Peter said? **“A thousand years for us is like one day for the Lord.”** This Millennial Reign, this Kingdom Age, this 1000 years is the seventh day on which no one was to work. The Sabbath day, seventh day, Shabbat, was not made for man. I totally botched it already. I'm not even going to try to — Man was not made for the Sabbath. The Sabbath was made for man.

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And the Sabbath was a prototype, a picture, a type pointing to the person of Jesus Christ who fulfilled the no-work requirements. Because we're not saved by works but by grace through faith. By grace alone, through faith alone, in Christ alone, not of works. That's the fulfillment of the Sabbath. He fulfilled the Sabbath at His first coming.

But this pattern of seven — and by the way, the number of man = 6: Incomplete. The number 7: Complete. The number 8: New beginnings. The number 6, though, do you realize that depending on which calendar you're using because there are several — I think by God's design. Because He said, “No man will know the day or the hour.”

So we are at 6000 years. I think it was the prophet Hosea, a prophetic type, said that for two days you will be scattered, and on the third day I'll bring you back and return you. The third day: a prophetic picture of the 2000 years since the crucifixion, which has only been two days for the Lord. And on the third day, He rose from the dead. The third day is the seventh day, that 7000-year period.

Okay, Pastor, what is your point? Or even better asked, do you even have a point? I do, and here it is. We will rule, judge, and reign with Jesus Christ for 1000 years. What was your problem again? Would to God, and I'll include myself, that we would view our pain, our suffering our... and I'm not trying to make light of it. Believe you me, the Lord knows my heart. I've drunk deeply from this cup of pain and suffering.

But would to God that we would view that pain, suffering, through the lens of our reign and ruling. Here's what happens. And we'll go on to the second one, just quickly. You know, when you have your eyes fixed on the trial, the problem, the issue, it gets bigger, and thus God gets smaller.

And conversely, when you fix your eyes on God — well, first of all, Isaiah says, **“He will keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on Thee.”** So if my mind and my eyes are fixed and stayed on Him, pfft! That's in the JDV. Just, pfft! The trial just went — oh, you — I have now a much-needed change of perspective when I view it through the lens of eternity.

That's why I started off with *Romans 8:18*. I mean, I almost in some ways at some times, especially when it's really the hard times, I just imagine God going, “If you only knew. I've already told you ahead of time what I have in store for you when it comes time. But the way

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you're reacting, not even responding, reacting in the midst of this pain and suffering seems to indicate that you don't really believe it. Because if you did, you would factor that in, and it would change everything. It would change how you view what you're going through. It would change what you do when you're going through it, how you're going to act." Just let God in. Invite Him in. He won't force His way in.

The first miracle in Galilee at this wedding was when Jesus turned the water into the wine. But do you realize that if Jesus hadn't been invited to that wedding, that miracle would have never happened? Just think about that. Let that sink in. Because you think Jesus is going to just be a wedding crasher? No, He's not going to come unless He's invited. And His mother Mary was invited.

And it's actually a powerful account. We talked about it during a Tuesday night prayer meeting. I mean, there's so much just in that first miracle. But I only mention it because how often are we guilty of not inviting God into our trial? He'll come. He'll RSVP, if you prefer. And when He does, whoo! I'm sorry. Did I wake somebody up?

1 Corinthians 6:3. I gotta give you the context, the backstory, and set this up. First of all, you have to understand that the Apostle Paul had a very argumentative and combative relationship with the carnal Corinthians. It was testy. That's why they're so corrective, both epistles. And I mean, they were doing all kinds of stuff, and Paul just had to rebuke them in love. Get this. They were actually filing lawsuits against fellow born-again Christian brothers and sisters. And Paul hears about it and then writes about it to correct them about it. And here's what he says: **"Do you not know that we will judge angels? How much more the things of this life!"**

Now I want to clear up a misnomer while we're in the neighborhood. The misnomer is, "Oh, they earned their wings." You heard this one? "God wanted [When our daughter died] your little — His little angel." No. We don't become angels. We judge angels. We're higher than angels.

Do you know that actually we're told in Scripture that the angels are — this is a loose paraphrase — they're scratching their heads trying to figure us out. Because I mean, they're heavenly angels given charge. I feel so sorry for the angels given charge concerning me. I'm

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going to — the first thing I'm going to do is a formal apology. "I'm so sorry that you were given my file." But now they're given charge concerning us, but they're not over us. When we rule and reign, we're over them, and we judge them. So when you die, **"Absent from the body, present with the Lord."** You don't become an angel. You're there in spirit until you get your glorified body which remains in the dust; dust to dust.

Revelation 5:10, **"You have made them to be a kingdom [I'm liking this] and priests to serve our God, and they will reign on the earth."**

Wow! Before we go to the second one in *verse 5*, can I just ask you to take this home with you today? If you only knew what God had planned for you, you wouldn't do what you're doing today in that set of circumstances. You're going to be a judge, a priest ruling, reigning.

Here's the second one. The second reason that the pain in this life is not anywhere close to being compared with the reign in eternal life is because you're going to be in the first resurrection. Let me explain this because it requires an explanation of what the first resurrection is and when the first resurrection is.

If you'll just hanging in there with me, I'll try not to unnecessarily complicate this. But the first resurrection started with Christ's resurrection as the first fruits. Then subsequently, there's going to be yet three more in their order, resurrections, ending after the 1000 years. So in other words, if my math is right, the first resurrection is contiguous for approximately, by the end of the Millennium, 3000 years in four stages, starting with Christ's resurrection.

Well, okay, if Christ is the first resurrection and the first one to resurrect as the first fruits, fulfilling the first fruits prophecy, then who's the second? I was so glad that you asked that. Because the second is at the pre-Tribulation rapture, when the dead in Christ rise first. Those are all your loved ones. Their body — it's a bodily resurrection. They're going to get their glorified bodies before we do. I'm cool with that as long as I get mine.

So the dead in Christ rise first, *1 Thessalonians 4*, **"Then we who are alive and remain..."** It's been said, I think aptly so, that you're either going to go by rupture or rapture. I'll take the latter. Thank you very much.

So in other words, there's going to be those who will not experience death but will be transformed in the twinkling of an eye. Metamorphosis. The word in the original Greek, it

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has the idea of like a caterpillar in the metamorphosis into a butterfly. When we fly, we put off corruptible. Can't wait. This body, corruptible mortal body, as Paul would say: **"This body of death."**

And notice he asks, **"Who will deliver me?"** Not what. Who. He knows who. Jesus. When? At the pre-Tribulation rapture because that's the second of the first resurrection. And then what's the third? Oh, the Old Testament saints and the Tribulation saints.

Now that one, I hope you're not going to get derailed by this, but that's the time prior to the 1000-year reign that the Old Testament saints and Tribulation saints are resurrected, and they're part of the first resurrection. That's three.

So Christ; the church, when the rapture pre-Tribulation happens; and three, the Old Testament saints and Tribulation saints. Now, we still got one to go. That's *verse 5*. The fourth part of the first resurrection, fourth and final part, I should say, is the unsaved. Ooh. You don't want to be a part of that one.

1 Corinthians 15:20-23. Listen very closely to this. **"But Christ has indeed been raised from the dead, the firstfruits [Firstfruits] of those who have fallen asleep. [Speaking of death] [Not soul sleep, body] For since death came through a man, the resurrection of the dead comes also through a man. For as in Adam all die, so in Christ all will be made alive.**

[Now watch this. Verse 23] **But each in his own turn: [This is in phases] [In order] Christ, the firstfruits; [Number 1] then, when He comes, [To catch us up, rapture us up] when He comes, those who belong to Him."**

Do you belong to Him? Do you know Him? Have you surrendered to Him? Have you trusted in Him? Are you saved by Him? If so, cool. Again, this is — this is not pie in the sky. No, that's a poor... (Sigh)

Well, for lack of a better one, let me have that one too. I know it's hard to grasp, but that's okay. It's God's word to us, and it will come to pass exactly as God said it would. It's not contingent upon whether or not we believe it. "I mean, that's just, that's unreal, man. That's just..."

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Like I titled one of my Prophecy Updates a while back: 'When Bible Prophecy Is Too Unbelievable To Be Believable.' And it reminds me of the prophet that God used to speak these words. "Listen, I wanted to tell you. But if I would have told you, you wouldn't have believed it. So I'm not going to tell you because you wouldn't believe it even if I did. It's too unbelievable."

This is unbelievable, right? (Struggling to find words) Can I get just someone to make me feel better about myself right now? Isn't it like that with you? This is just, wow! Crazy, right? But it's real. It's really real, and it's really going to happen. Believe it because God said it. That should settle it. Okay, I thought I would feel better after that one, but I don't.

Number 3. Verse 6. And then we'll be done. And this is huge. Pain in this life ending with my reign in eternal life, I'll be spared from the second death. What? What's that? I mean, I thought it was the writer of Hebrews that said, **"It's appointed unto men once to die, and then the judgment."** You're talking about dying twice?

Yeah. Watch this now. Just stay with me. This is arguably one of the most powerful promises we have to look forward to when we go through a trial, painful trial, and suffering and difficulty. Here's why. Those who are born-again, born twice, only die once, maybe. What do you mean? Well, we may not even die once. How cool would that be? I mean, I never — if the rapture — and by the looks of things, again, I'm telling you.

And this is not just — oh, the Lord knows my heart when I say this. Oh my goodness, we are so close. We are so close. If this isn't the doorstep to the seven-year Tribulation and the rapture which is pre-Tribulation, I don't know what is. We talked about that in the Update. Don't make me redo the Update again. (Chuckle) Some of you sat through that. Bless you. You have treasures in heaven.

So I'm born-again twice. I only die once, maybe, dot, dot, dot. Jury's still out. But those only born once, not born-again, not born twice, born once die twice. Okay, Pastor, you have been met with smashing success in really twisting and confusing me into a pretzel, a scriptural pretzel, but a pretzel, nonetheless.

Okay. If you're not born-again you will not enter the kingdom of heaven. If you die in your sins you're on death row right now. But the good news is, is that Jesus died for your sins so

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that you would not have to die in your sins. And when He did that on the cross with His blood shed in our stead, He purchased us and a gift for us, **“The gift of God, which is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.”** You are not your own, but you are purchased with a price. By the way, when Jesus said, **“It is finished,”** period, not comma, period, it was really saying in an accounting sense, paid in full with My blood. All my sin. Though as scarlet, now white as snow. Remembered no more. Removed as far as the east is from the west.

This whole born-again thing, I'm going to address something that came up several times in the past and even recently. How do you know if someone is born-again? Good question, right? Now the go-to, the default is well, Jesus said, **“You'll know them by their fruit.”**

Okay, I mean, you'll know what kind of tree that is when you see what kind of fruit that tree has. Because a bad tree doesn't bear good fruit and a good tree doesn't bear bad fruit. So that's a mango tree. How do you know? There are mango on that tree. Duh! Now that's the go-to. But that's not quite good enough for this reason. When you liken it, as Jesus did, to being born of the Spirit, not a physical birth, but a spiritual birth, you need to pay attention to that detail.

Question: How did you know your child was born? Why are you looking at me like that? Oh, there was no question they were born because I was constantly going to my wife, “Here, nurse him so I can get some sleep!” There was no question. They craved milk. Then they started crawling. That was a nightmare. Now you’ve got to childproof your home. Then they started walking. That was even scarier. Then they started running. Oh, man! Get the first aid kit.

And then they started teething and growing and maturing into an adult. How do you know your child was born? Look at him now. the writer of Hebrews, in a rebuke, in love, said, “You know...” (Chuckle) He didn’t say it like that. Effects added. “You know, you should be eating meat right now, but you're still on — being nursed with mama's milk. Some of you should be teachers by now. You've not matured in Christ.”

You know when your children are infants, the noises they make are adorable. In fact, you do silly, stupid stuff just to make them make that noise and sound because it's so adorable.

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That's when they're infants. What about when they're 25 and they're still doing that? Well, that's a different story. They've never matured.

So to our question of how do you know if someone's born-again? Oh, you'll know. They'll crave the things of God, fellowship with the people of God. They'll crave the word of God. Yeah, they might need it bottle fed at first or nursed at first, but — that rhymed — but eventually they'll start teething. Horrible, horrible time when they teeth. And then once they got those teeth in, whoo! Where's the beef? They're gnawing on the meat of God's word. I like how one delineated it. It is first the milk, the manna, then the meat. I won't break that down because time won't permit.

I want to close with *Daniel 12:2* because I think it really sums it up perfectly. Last chapter of Daniel the Prophet by the Holy Spirit writes, *[Listen]* **“And many of those who sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake...”** That is speaking of death. Dust to dust, ashes to ashes. They will be resurrected. Now wait. **“...some to everlasting life, some to shame and everlasting contempt.”**

Translated: The first resurrection, the first three = salvation. The last one = damnation. And here's the thing. For all eternity. It works both ways. Now you might, and I hope you do, take great comfort and encouragement from a text like this because it just gives you a snapshot, a glimpse of what we have to look forward to when we're priests and judges, and ruling and reigning for 1000 years with Christ as His bride by His side. That's just incomprehensible, too marvelous for words.

But let's flip it around, as Daniel by the Holy Spirit does. If the first resurrection includes everlasting life, then wouldn't it stand that it would also include everlasting hell? “Wait, Pastor, you're not going to do that, are you? You're not going to do the whole hell is forever thing, are you?” “

I just did, and actually, technically, it wasn't me. It wasn't me. I didn't do that. God's word says that.”

“Yeah, but so-and-so wrote a book a while ago: ‘Hell isn't forever.’ And I think there was another book right next to it: ‘Heaven is forever.’”

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Okay, okay. Just whatever... No. The soul is eternal. We were created for eternity. We were created to be with Him for eternity. But we had to choose because He won't force us. That's why God didn't just torch Lucifer when he rebelled in heaven, saying, "I will ascend my throne above the Most High."

Aye yai yai! I wouldn't have cast him down. I would've said, "Really?" Zap! "Anybody else?"

Now, why did why did God do that? Because He had to let — imagine the two thirds of heaven, the angelic host. If God would have done that, it would have changed the whole relationship of their worship from love, freely of their own volition, to force out of fear.

Adam and Eve: Why did — I wouldn't have done that. I wouldn't have put the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil. I would have left that out and just say, you know, of all the trees you can eat. Bye. I'll be around but have fun. Bon appétit.

But no, He didn't do that. He said, "But of this one tree, thou shalt not eat." Why did He do that? Because God wants us to invite Him, choose Him out of love. He's given us free will. What if I told you that biblically, soundly, doctrinally, God never created hell for man? I like how one said it. Jesus, while on the cross would say, "Over my dead and resurrected body will you go to hell."

He doesn't send them there. They send themselves there. How so? By refusing the gift of God, which is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord. It was there for them, paid for them. No. Their choice. God will never — He'll stop at nothing, do everything shy of violating our free will in order that we might choose life eternal, not death eternal. Okay. I'm done. Have a blessed Father's Day.

Kapono, come on up, and I'll pray, and then you can close. Lord, I hope that somehow, as only You are able, really, by the Holy Spirit to take this teaching and tune it, tailor it to every heart of everyone here and everyone online. Please. Because this is what awaits us for real and it makes the sufferings, the trial, the pain of this temporal life pale in comparison to what awaits us in eternal life. Please get through our stiff-necked, thick-headed, hard-hearted lives with this freeing truth. We pray in Jesus' name. Amen.