

Revelation 17:1-6
Why Sin Is So Seductive Yet So Destructive
Pastor JD Farag

KAPONO: Would you join me as we pray? Lord, thank You so much. We just — wow, what a Prophecy Update! Lord, I pray that You would just help us process through all that was taught, Lord. And then again, Lord, as we get into Your word, would we be blessed, Lord, by what it is that You have for us, Lord, in this book. We thank You again, Lord, for this place that You've blessed us with, Lord, and for our pastors.

Continue to be with Pastor Leitu, Pastor Mac, Lord. And as Pastor JD delivers the message this morning, Lord, continue to give him strength, as You always do, to do what he do. So we thank You and we ask these things in Your name, we pray, Jesus. We say Amen.

PASTOR JD: And Amen. And good morning and welcome. So glad you're here. You can be seated. Glad you were able to come today. Those of you online, we're glad that you're able to join with us today.

A couple of things though, two things before we jump in. I just want to ask that you keep praying for Pastor Leitu. So the surgery was a success, but he ended up back in the hospital after experiencing chest pain. And they believed it was A-fib flux.

However, the good news and the praise report is he's back home now because it was just part of any reaction to the major open-heart surgery. So he's okay. Jeannie is taking care of him. He's driving her crazy. I know nothing of that, nor does my wife know anything of that. But anyway... Seriously, pray specifically for a swift recovery and a swift return because I kind of need him. It's a very selfish prayer request. But a swift recovery.

Also, sadly, please pray for Pastor Tim Newman, his family, and his church family. As some of you know, he's the pastor of Calvary Chapel Windward there in the Aikahi Park Shopping Center. His wife, Kathy, who was diagnosed with cancer about the same time my wife was went home to be with the Lord because the cancer was swiftly and aggressively spreading. So I reached out to Tim, who I know very well.

Actually, Tim and Kathy are good friends of — were of Kellie's and mine. And this is really hard. So pray specifically for the Comforter, the Holy Spirit, to just supernaturally comfort. And this — it's a smaller church, but she was just bigger than life and had such a pronounced role. And for those that knew her, I mean her countenance, just joy, love. I mean, she was just such a beautiful soul and is going to be sorely missed.

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And I'm praying for my brother Tim. But please, if you would, as the Lord puts it on your heart, pray for Calvary Chapel Windward and Pastor Tim and his family. He has a son and a daughter, both of whom have children, so his grandchildren, and then their church family as well.

Okay. We're going to start *Chapter 17* today. Before you get too excited, I need to let you know that *Chapters 17 and 18* are amongst the toughest chapters in all of the Bible. How's that for an intro? Shall we bow our heads, close our eyes? You can slip out. Both these chapters are the fifth and final parenthetical passage after the final bowl judgment from the seventh angel, which John is going to allude to in *Chapter 17*.

Now, what are these parenthetical passages? They're sort of placed there for a reason. They're there for more information, more details about what is going to transpire during this period of time. And the focus of these two chapters, as we're about to see, is going to be this harlot, prostitute, this woman riding a scarlet beast, upon which are written blasphemous names. Okay, I basically just read the text, so let's read the text. If you're able, I ask you to stand for the reading of God's word. You can follow along. But if not, where you're seated is just fine. No problem.

Verse 1. John, by the Holy Spirit, writes, **“One of the seven angels who had the seven bowls came and said to me, “Come, I will show you the punishment of the great prostitute, who sits by many waters. With her [Verse 2] the kings of the earth committed adultery, and the inhabitants of the earth were intoxicated with the wine of her adulteries.”**

Then [Verse 3] the angel carried me away in the Spirit into a wilderness. There I saw a woman sitting on a scarlet beast that was covered with blasphemous names and had seven heads and ten horns. The woman, [Verse 4] was dressed in purple and scarlet and was glittering with gold, precious stones, and pearls. She held a golden cup in her hand, filled with abominable things and the filth of her adulteries.

The name [Verse 5] written on her forehead was a mystery: Babylon the great, the mother [Mother] of prostitutes and of the abominations of the earth. I saw that the woman [Verse 6] was drunk with the blood of God's holy people, [The saints] the blood of those who bore testimony to Jesus. When I saw her, I was greatly astonished.”

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You see why we're only taking the first six verses? (Gasping) Let's pray.

Oh Lord, We need Thee. Oh, Lord, every hour we need Thee. And we need Thee this hour because there's something here, maybe many things here that You would desire for us to apply personally to our lives. Even though it's about the Tribulation that we're not in, there's something, maybe many things that we can get from.

So Lord, we're going to ask You, as only You can, to speak by the Holy Spirit in that still, small, refining voice right to our heart. Because You know the heart. You know every heart of everyone that is in this church service and even those watching online. We only see the outward appearance. So Lord because You see the heart and know the heart, would You minister to our hearts from this? We're asking You for this. In Jesus' name. Amen and amen. You can be seated. Thank you very much.

So I want to talk with you today about why sin is so seductive despite it being so destructive in and to our lives as Christians. But I need you to bear with me. Do I ask you that a lot? Okay. That wasn't a very convincing answer, so I probably do. I need you to bear with me, please because before we take and tackle today's tough text — you like all the T's — I need to explain how I'm going to approach the teaching of both *Chapters 17 and 18*.

Again, as I'm sure most of you know, especially those of you that read ahead to stay ahead, that both chapters are about the destruction of Babylon, principally. But the problem is that this has become the subject of much debate.

Let me explain. Teachers have taught that Babylon may be Rome, a revived Roman Empire, America, some say Jerusalem, or last, but certainly not least, literal Babylon in modern-day Iraq, which is a city located about 50 miles from the modern-day capital of Iraq, Baghdad. It's for this reason that my approach is going to be more about how and why the destruction of Babylon comes and not so much about who or where Babylon is.

And here's why I have to humbly confess that I still do not know, and I'm not going to pretend that I do. I still don't know for sure, even though there are no shortages of compelling arguments from well-respected teachers, all of whom, most of whom I know personally, and all of whom I have listened to and watched.

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Conclusion? Duh. I still don't know. I cannot say for a certainty and hang my hat on anything doctrinally that says this is the location and identity of who Babylon is. I'm unsure. Is that okay? That wasn't convincing either, so I'm gonna move on. Pastor Chuck Smith, the late Pastor Chuck Smith, the pastor of pastors, used to teach us about how when he didn't know, (Gasping) Pastor Chuck didn't know? I thought he knew everything.

No. He would readily admit when he didn't know, he would put it in a file he labeled "need more information." I have a file like Pastor Chuck's, same label: "Need more information," in which I placed the identity and location of Babylon. Are we still okay? All right.

Also, I really want you to think through what I'm about to say because it has much merit. The debate on who or where Babylon is can have the effect of distracting us from the main point of what Babylon represents. See, if we're all focused on: No, it's not Rome. It's not — it's not America. It's not, you know, literal Babylon. It's.... We get all caught up in that, we play right into the enemy's hand, and we miss the whole point. What is the main point? What is the whole point? It's what Babylon represents.

Okay, what does Babylon represent? You ready? Wait for it. It represents spiritual idolatry and spiritual adultery in rebellion against God, with man seeking to reach God, in man's quest to be God without God. I hope you got that. It should be noted, by the way, that all the world's false religions were birthed out of the original Tower of Babel there in the Plains of Shinar, recorded in *Genesis 11*, where we read about Nimrod. And this is where it goes back to Babel, Babylon.

Also, another reason for this approach is that in addition to still being uncertain of who Babylon is, the focus of our verse-by-verse study through Revelation has been on the personal application. And by that, I mean we're taking the prophetic information that's in it, and we're building a bridge of sorts to the personal application from it. Why?

Because we focus on the prophetic information in Revelation every week by way of our weekly Prophecy Updates, which we've done for well-nigh two decades now. So as I — as we were finishing Jude, which doesn't give you much time because Jude is like a really short book, doesn't even have a *Chapter 2*.

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After we were just about to finish Jude, I knew here it comes, and so I just went to the throne, and I petitioned the throne. And I prayed, and I fasted. And I said, Lord, I love the Book of Revelation, the only book in the Bible the promise is a blessing to those who read it, hear it, take it to heart. I've taught through the Book of Revelation no less than four times prior. This is like my fifth time. How do You want me to teach this book this time?

And He made it very clear that I was to focus, not so much on the prophetic information, but not abandon it, but more on the personal application because I am keenly aware that there are many that are hurting and struggling and going through unthinkable, horrific tragedies. And if I were to get up here and just spout off all this prophetic information, and here's somebody that is going through the trial of their life, and I'm talking about Mystery Babylon the Great and the destruction and the intoxication and the prostitution, like wow, that was a good sermon. Thank you, Pastor. Bye.

No, this is what I love about the word of God and the God of the word. It's alive and active and sharper than any two-edged sword, able to divide between bone and marrow, soul and spirit. It cuts right to the heart and gets right to the core of the problem. And that's the problem. The problem is the problem. Isn't that deeply profound? I know that's why you come here, for these profound insights.

The problem is the problem, not the symptoms. The symptoms are the symptoms of the problem. I'm not going to use the headache analogy, which I just used, but we have temporary pain relievers. That's what they are. They relieve pain temporarily, but it comes back. Why? Because there's another serious problem that's causing the headaches. Why don't you find out what the problem is, the source? Cure the problem; symptoms go away. And that's the problem. The problem is the problem.

And I'll speak for myself as a pastor, which is my profound privilege to be. In talking with my pastor friends, there is a marked uptick and increase in spiritual warfare against specifically pastors right now, and it's the likes of which we've never before seen, which tells me one thing. We're really close to the rapture.

So again, just speaking for myself, I hope you don't mind the personal reference. But I just know in my relationship with the Lord that the struggles that I have in my life are such that I

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know you have many struggles in your life, and the last thing you need is another sermon. You need a word from the Lord. You need a word from the Lord. That's why you're here. What, you're here for me? We'll pray for you if that's the case.

No, you're here to hear God speak into your life in and through His word by the power of the Holy Spirit, very specifically, sometimes very personally, sometimes confidentially, and it's such that, you know it's the Lord because only the Lord knows that about you. Only the Lord knows what's going on in your heart, in your life, and only the Lord can speak to it.

So what are you saying, Pastor? Well, I'm trying to explain myself as to why I'm taking this approach and focusing more on the personal application. So that's my story, and I'm sticking with it. Are you ready to take and tackle the tough text — did I get four in there — before us today with our focus chiefly being on the personal application from the prophetic information that we're provided in the text? And by the way, all Scripture is God-breathed. I mean, we have it in our Bibles, what, to fill up space?

Well, Pastor, we're not going to go through the Tribulation. Why do we need to study about the Tribulation? Because there's so many lessons to learn from the Tribulation. Here's what I'm hoping to accomplish with today's teaching. I want to bring to the forefront all of our propensity, proclivity, if you prefer, to be enticed by the seduction of sin despite knowing that it leads to the destruction, from sin. We know this.

So why is it that we're so easily enticed and seduced into sin, knowing the destruction that always ensues because of that sin? Well, I found three. Does that give you hope? Aren't you glad I didn't say ten? I found three, three reasons. If you want to call them takeaways, that's fine. Personal application. Three of them from today's text as it relates to the seduction and destruction of the prostitute and Mystery Babylon the Great.

Now some of your translations render it as “the whore.” I mean, you talk about pulling no punches. This is in your Bible. Maybe this is one of the reasons why everybody stays away from the Book of Revelation, doesn't want to touch it with a ten-foot pole. Have you seen what's in there?

This is why when you teach expositionally, verse-by-verse, or textually and not topically only, you can't get away with, hey, you know what? We're just going to skip *17 and 18*, go right to

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19 because that's the Second Coming, and I'm already buss up from the first, you know, from *Chapter 6* on all these judgments, the seal judgments, the trumpet judgments, the bowl judgments.

No, these two chapters are huge. They're huge and not just because of the information and details they provide, but because of the lessons that can be learned. When we leave here today and go our separate ways, all of us, myself included, we're going to take with us, we're going to take home with us a word from the Lord for each and every one of us. And it's different for all of us. I'm not going to tell you what the word is for me. If you want to tell me what yours was, that's fine. We can talk after.

But that's what the word of God is. It is alive. And the word of God speaks. So let's let the word of God speak. What do You want me to see here, Lord? What do You want me to know? What do You want me to take home from this? This pastor keeps yelling at me. What is it? Just can we...

The first one, *verses 1 and 2*: Sin can be intoxicating. Now stay with me. Here, John writes that one of the seven angels, presumably the seventh angel, shows him the judgment of this whore, this prostitute, this adulterous prostitute. And notice the detail. And he saw that she was drunk. You know, you can tell when somebody is drunk, (Slurring the word "drunk") slurring their words. (Slurring)

I did that too good, didn't I? (Chuckling) I better be careful. But she's intoxicated. She's a prostitute. And in turn, we're also told that she is not only intoxicated, but she intoxicates. You've heard the, doubtless, the expression that "deceived people deceive people." Intoxicated people intoxicate people."

And sin is very seductively intoxicating. What does it mean to be intoxicated, inebriated? You're not thinking clearly. Your mind has is now in a drunken and altered state and sobriety is gone. And this is the description we have. And then, I mean, it starts getting really graphic. He goes into this horrific description. And we — this, again, is why we're taking only the first six verses because, Lord willing, next week John is going to have the explanation of what all this symbolism means in *verses 7-18*.

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So you have to come next week. Okay, now you're not going to come next week. But here's the takeaway. Sin is so seductive and so attractive. I mean, think about it. If sin wasn't attractive, it wouldn't be tempting. (Stumbling over words)

Well, you have a penchant for just having a firm grasp of the obvious. Duh. Think about Joseph. His boss's wife. Every day she's trying to seduce him. One day — read this account in Genesis. It can be life changing, a game changer at the very least. It's very detailed. Again, those details are there for a reason. And God speaks in and through those details.

And we're told in a very detailed way that every day she's on him like white on rice. Is that too much? Maybe I should have.... **“Come lie with me.”** And then one day she sets it up, plans it out. All the servants; you guys got the day off. Double pay. Go! And she gets all ready. I would imagine perfume and scantily — I don't want to get too — don't, don't you — don't use your imagination on this, okay, especially guys.

So... and she just waits for Joseph to show up for work. And here he walks in on time, sometimes early. He's a hard worker. It said — detail — of Joseph that Potiphar trusted him so much that he didn't worry about a thing. He left everything to Joseph. That's why he wasn't even there. I can trust this guy with every affair of my business. He's a trustworthy, upright, righteous, ethical man of God, the true and living God. So he knew he could trust Joseph with not only his business affairs and all of his money, of which he had a lot, but he could also trust Joseph with his wife, alone.

Now think about this. Just be careful, but picture this. Here's a young man. It's believed that Joseph is probably in his early 20s, far away from home. He's already been left for dead. His dad thinks he's dead. And here he is after 17 years — that was the length of the process of preparation that God had for him. And this was part of it because God will always prepare us for that which He's preparing for us. You just don't make a man like Joseph, the most powerful man in the world, save Pharaoh without preparing him first.

And all that he goes through, and no hint of complaining when his brothers leave him for dead, throw him in the pit. There is some interesting detail in that account. He's screaming, wailing, crying. **“You guys, you're my brothers. Why are you doing this to me?”** And then

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they sell him for — interesting, the typology — silver, pieces of silver, into slavery in Egypt, a type of the world. And then he shows up in Egypt.

He's bought on the slave block by — at the slave auction from Potiphar — by Potiphar. And then he starts watching this guy and going, man, this guy, I got a good deal on this buy with this guy. So he knew that he could trust Joseph to be alone with his wife.

But watch this. He didn't trust his wife to be alone with Joseph. How do I know that? Because when she falsely accuses him of alleged rape, Potiphar, under the law of the land, would have had him killed immediately. But he doesn't. He has him sent to prison instead, reluctantly, I might add. You don't think he knows his wife?

And by the way, when you're a powerful man, it doesn't matter what you look like, You can look like me. You have power and wealth. Your wife: You can have any wife you want because they want what you have. So you got to know that she wasn't — how do I — I gotta be careful. I should have had this in my notes. This is — I'm going where angels fear to tread. But you gotta know that she had to be drop-dead gorgeous. I mean, right?

Because think about it. If she looked like Ma Kettle — is that a good comparison, Ma Kettle? You know, the apron; she's in her 80s. This is not.... Please forgive me. You know, this is not an age thing. I'm just trying to illustrate this. This is the best I got, so if you got something better, let me know.

She's in her 80s. Ma Kettle got the apron, the cap, you know, sweating in the kitchen, cooking. And she's seducing me? I'm walking in victory, man. No, where's the temptation? I'm like, go back to the kitchen, sweetheart. You're adorable. I love you, but just really? Hasn't that ship already sailed anyway? I don't want to take it too far. You get the point.

So in other words, she couldn't. Because if she was, Joseph would not have been tempted. There's no temptation here. There's no seduction here. I am not seduced at all. I'm repulsed, actually, instead. So where are you going with this, Pastor? Well, I'm doing the best I can with the help of the Holy Spirit to communicate how seductive and intoxicating sin is. The seduction is like — we use this illustration — like a magnet, and the sin nature are the metal shavings.

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And all it takes is for the enemy to bring that magnet to pull out that sin. Paul said to the Romans, **“I know that what dwells within me, that is in my flesh, there dwelleth no good thing.”** And it sounds so noble. You should get your hands on the Living Bible translation. It says it straight up. I know that I am a dirty, stinking — This is my — the JDV, actually. I know that deep down inside I am rotten to the core. I am a dirty, stinking, rotten sinner. And in me there dwells no good thing. Jesus said as much. **“Apart from Me, you can do no good thing.”**

Well, I got the Holy Spirit in me, enabling me, empowering me — we talked about this Thursday night — to live a holy life, to do justly, love mercy, and walk humbly before your Lord. That was an important delineation that has to be made because this is a misnomer, and the enemy doesn't want you to know this. And so right now, something is going to come into your mind to distract you and get your mind to wander, so you don't hear what I'm about to say. Oh, I got your attention now. That worked out pretty good. I'm gonna use that one again.

It is not a sin to be tempted. Let me say it again. It is not a sin to be tempted. If it were a sin to be tempted, Jesus sinned because Jesus was tempted. If you have your Bible, would you join me in James, *Chapter 1*? I'm going to read *verses 13-16*. Again, being tempted is not sin. Where the sin comes in is when the temptation is given into.

Listen to what James writes. **“When tempted, no one should say 'God is tempting me,' for God cannot be tempted by evil, nor does He tempt anyone. But [And here's the key, verse 14] each person is tempted when they are dragged away by their own evil desire and enticed.”**

Boom! Mic drop. We haven't even finished the text yet. Did you catch that? So it's not a sin to be tempted, but the sin comes in when I give in and am enticed by the metal shavings of my own evil desires that dwell within me. They're dormant. But all it takes is for the boss's wife to come by and say, **“Lie with me.”** Who's gonna know?

You know what Joseph's response was? Well, first of all, he ran. Guys, listen. Wives, let us have this one. Don't — no elbows. This is “Mono e mono,” man to man, husband to husband. Listen. Satan knows that we have those evil desires at the ready to be enticed.

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And he knows just how to do it. He knows just how to seduce us, entice us, and drag us away.

Because that's when *verse 15* happens. **“Then after desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin. And sin, when it is full grown, gives birth to death. Don't be deceived, my dear brothers and sisters.”**

That encapsulates the entire teaching today. How is it? How do you reconcile it? Sin is s-s-s-so seductive. And turn the TV off. Because those ads, you know, especially the Super Bowl ads that they pay a jillion dollars for ten seconds for — I know this for a fact. There's a science to it. It's proven. They are all designed around *James 1:13-16*. Let me explain.

So we have in our sin nature, our Adamic nature, and will have as long as we're in these fleshly tents — we're all going to have this proclivity, this draw, this propensity to be enticed by sin, tempted by sin, by evil. And here's how it works. When you're watching TV, and you're watching those commercials — I don't know where they find these people, but these are the most beautiful people I've ever seen on the face of the earth. And they are driving a brand-new car. It's a car commercial. I have to use car commercials because I was in the car business. Let me have that one.

So... and they've got the biggest smile you've ever seen in your life, and they look so happy. You know when I was in the auto business, they actually charged the dealer for every unit in their inventory for those ads that cost a jillion dollars for ten seconds. And you're paying for it. You're paying to be seduced and tempted.

So what happens? You're watching this commercial. Wow, they look happy. I'm not that happy. They're so beautiful. It's because they bought that new car. Man, I haven't smiled like that since I can't remember when. I know this sounds crazy, but this is how they — they study the neuroscience.

So here's how the brain works. The brain goes, “If only I could buy that car, I will be as beautiful as them, and have as big of a smile as them, and be as happy as them. And so you go out into your garage or carport. If you live in Hawaii, you don't have either. It's parked on the street. Hopefully, your car's still there.

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You go out. I've seen this commercial. You go out your car; you're like, I hate you. You don't make me happy. You smell bad. You break down all the time. You leave me stranded. I have to call roadside service. I don't smile when I'm driving you. And you're ugly. You make me look ugly. I'm getting rid of you. I'm trading you in. I know that's a very funny way and humorous way to illustrate it. But it's true.

See, sin only shows you the front side, not the fine print. Let's take beer commercials very carefully and very quickly. Beer commercials. Oh my goodness, Bud Light, the King of beer commercials. Remember that one from — this will date me. Guy sits down next to his friend on the dock fishing. He just starts really, you know, saying all kinds of nice things about him. You know, "You're — I love you, man. You're my best friend. You're just — you're like a loyal friend. I love you, man." And the friend turns to him and says, "You're not getting my Bud Light."

That was a brilliant commercial. See, that's what Satan does. He comes, he sits down next to you, and he goes, "Hey." And here's this beer commercial. Hey. Look how happy they are. Look at the woman he has next to him. Look at how much fun they're having. Well, if only they would show you the same people the next day when they're barfing in the bathroom over the toilet. Is that too much? They show you the beautiful side of sin but not the destructive consequences of sin.

This actually ties into our second one. And we'll go quick, quickly, quicker through these. So don't look at your watches yet. Verses 3 and 4: Sin can be very alluring. Here, we're told John is carried away in the Spirit to a wilderness, and he sees this adulterous woman, this harlot, this whore riding a scarlet beast, having blasphemous names on it.

Okay, we got that. But this is where it gets really interesting because we're provided these details that this whore — you'll forgive — I'm teaching the word of God. You want to call it prostitute? Honey, whore, harlot. You pick your word, and you fill it in. She's dressed — now listen — in purple and scarlet. Wait a minute. Only wealthy people could afford purple, that purple dye. You know how much it cost? And that scarlet? And she's glittering with gold. How much is gold per ounce now?

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And precious stones; we're talking diamonds, man. She's dripping with diamonds and pearls. And she's got a golden cup in her hand. How alluring is that? I mean, you're trying to keep your eyes on the Lord, and here she comes.

You're like... (Looking, but trying not to) Right? Am I right? You're allured away from the Lord. Because everything about her says look at me! Aren't those... isn't that gold glittering? Isn't that purple and scarlet I'm wearing something else? Aren't those diamonds and precious stones and pearls? And we haven't even got to the golden cup. We just don't know what it's filled with yet. We'll find out in a second.

How am I not going to be drawn to that? How am I not going to, at the very best, be distracted by that? This, to me, is one of the enemy's greatest successes. He's been met with smashing success in the life of a Christian, using the tool of distraction, busied distraction.

See, he changed his whole strategy once you got saved. Prior to you coming to a saving knowledge of Jesus Christ, Satan's sole strategy was to keep you from coming to a saving knowledge of Jesus Christ. Then there you go, and you get saved. He's like, ah! Regroup! Emergency demon meeting! What are we going to do now? Is that...?

You're probably wondering where I get all this stuff. I just go as I — I just make them up as I go. It's a gift. So they have a meeting. Okay, I know — he's saved. He can't lose his salvation. He's born-again. You can't be un-born-again. So oh, you're one of those once saved all always saved? Absolutely. What Bible are you reading? Wait. I can lose my salvation?

Wait, wait, wait, wait. Jesus saved me; He said, "Okay, I did my part. Wish you the best. See you later. Check in with you often, on occasion." Wait a minute. No. He said, "**It is finished.**" Period. Not it is finished, if, however, with the exception of. No. Done. It's done.

And besides, if I could — and it's impossible — if I could lose my salvation and by the way, if this is an issue, I really encourage you to bathe in Romans *Chapter 8*. Bathe in it. Live in it. Meditate on it. Nobody can snatch you out of the Lord's hands. Once you're His, you're His. Nothing can separate you from the love of God. Height, depth, principalities, powers of

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darkness, nor any created thing. Nothing. No one. When you're born — hey, your children, they're born, you know they're born. Maybe you've thought about it, But, you know, you can't un-born them. I'll give you a second. I know that one was a little bit weird, but if I have to do something to stay saved, that means there's works involved.

And *Ephesians 2:8-9* says, you are saved by grace through faith. **“It is the gift of God, not of works, lest any man should boast.”**

Could you imagine? You show up in heaven. And here's a guy going, “Hey, what did you do to stay saved?” “Yeah, man, I did blah, blah, blah, blah, blah.” I don't think that's heaven. I think that's the other place. No, there's no boasting. You're only there by the grace of God and the shed blood of Jesus Christ. You can't compare why you're there with anybody else there. No, you're granted access into the kingdom of God because of Jesus Christ, only by faith alone in Christ alone, period.

Okay, so why the details? Why do we need to know this? What's the takeaway from this? Be very, very, very careful because the enemy is very, very, very subtle. The enemy is never going to come up to you and go, “Hey, I'm the Devil, and I'm here to destroy your life. Let's go.”

No, he masquerades as an angel of light. He allures you. He just kind of entices and allures you with all the trappings of this world, which should have already lost their appeal, their alluring appeal. Because once you've tasted of the Lord and seen that He is good, you are ruined for Him. I don't have a taste for that. I don't have an appetite for that. I don't have a desire for that. Oh, no. I have desires. But He meets my every need, my every desire. He is all that I desire. The Lord is my shepherd. I shall not want for a thing. You're trying to flash your glittering gold. Get out of my face. Is that too strong?

Sometimes I have to do this when I'm in the heat of the spiritual battle. I mean, I — I do it out loud, not in public because I'd be institutionalized if I did. But I mean, I'm out loud. I'm full on. We're doing this! And I always put the Lord in between me and the enemy. The Lord rebuke you. You think that's going to entice me or allure me? That's all you got? That's all you got? That's all you got? Glittering gold, golden cup. Oh, by the way, I know what's in your cup. I know what you're drunk with too. It's filth. It's abominable. It's spiritual idolatry

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and spiritual adultery. And I want nothing to do with that. So go. Go to a different address. In fact, I'll give you a list of addresses. No, don't, don't do that. Don't do that.

We're almost done. Last one, *verses 5 and 6*. And I need to explain this one. It's not so easily seen at first read. But sin can be multiplying. Here, John says that he was — I'm astonished at how astonished John was astonished. He says he was greatly astonished when he saw what? Babylon the Great, the mother of prostitutes, and the mother of all the abominations. He was stunned.

Now here's a guy in his 90s at the time that he receives this vision and this revelation, banished there in the Island of Patmos. This guy's been through some stuff, man. This is the same John we're talking about that, by the Spirit, wrote the Gospel, the three epistles, and now he thinks he's going to retire. I love again what Pastor Chuck Smith used to say. Someone asked him, he said, "Why aren't you retired?" And Chuck's answer was, "I'm not tired." It's so good. We call him Chuck-isms. Ah, these...

So in other words, this guy has seen some stuff, and he's probably thinking after he writes his third epistle, "Okay, that's it; I'm ready to go home, Lord."

The Lord's going, "Not so fast. You're going to get thrown into a cauldron of boiling oil, [*As documented by historians*] but you're not going to die. They're going to try to kill you, and you're going to come out of that sauna, jacuzzi of oil, very hot, and you're going to — and they're not going to know what to do with you. So they're going to banish you to the Island of Patmos and leave you there to die."

This was not a tropical island. This was a desert island where they sent people to die. "So what do we do with him?"

"I don't know. If a cauldron of boiling oil isn't going to kill him, just get him out of here. Take him to Patmos."

"Okay. Off you go."

And here he is, John. Could you imagine if I'm John? I'm like, "Okay, can I go home? Are you kidding me? Why do we have to do the whole oil thing?"

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Here's the Lord. "Not yet. I got your best work ahead of you. I have the Revelation that I'm going to give to you to write, and then you can come home."

I'm redeeming myself. Did you notice how slick that was? My earlier comments about Ma Kettle in her '80s. Never imagine that you're too old for God to use. Good save, yeah? Good save. Well, it was at least a nice try.

Okay, so now we got this mother now. She's a mother, but she's a whore. She's a — she's a mother, but a whore? What do mothers do? They give birth to offspring. What's her offspring? Prostitutes and abominations. Multiplying. What did God say to Adam and Eve? **"Be fruitful and multiply."** Sin is multiplying.

And check this out. We already know she's drunk. (Slurring the word "drunk") But what is she drinking? (Slurring the word "drinking") Oh, the blood of the tribulation saints who were martyred for their testimony to Jesus.

Where are you going here, Pastor JD? How are you going to get something for us to take home with us out of this? Just be patient. Notice the astonishing swiftness with which sin spreads and multiplies, as evidenced by the mother of harlots multiplying prostitutions and abominations. Translated: Sin spreads. Sin spreads. Sin multiplies.

Why do you think it was that Paul was so strong in his first letter to the Corinthians concerning a guy, that they were tolerant of? We're such a loving church. We accept everybody. Yeah, but this guy's having sex with his stepmom. Kick him out of the church now! Hand him over to Satan for the destruction of his flesh. That's in your Bible, almost verbatim, by the way, so don't look at me like that.

Wow. Where's the love, Paul? Oh, we're getting to that. You think you're so loving, you think. You are boasting about, "We're the church of love. This is a loving church." Paul's like, "That's not love, this is love," *1 Corinthians 13*, affectionately referred to as a love chapter. Couples want it read at their wedding. If they only knew it was a rebuke.

You think that's what love is? That's not love. If you really love the guy, you'll give him over to Satan, so he comes to his senses, which he does, by the way, the second letter. He repents. He comes to his senses. Satan destroys him, the destruction from his sin. And then here's the Corinthians. Man, this must have been a weird church because...an extreme

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church. They should have been 'The Church of the Extremes of Corinth.' Because now they're going to the extreme opposite.

Now he's repented, and he wants to be restored. And they're like, nope, nope. We were told to kick you out, give you over to Satan for the destruction of your flesh. Paul has to write them another letter that says listen, restore the guy. What are you guys doing? It worked. That's love. **“Faithful are the wounds of a friend [They can be trusted], but an enemy multiplies kisses.”**

You think that's love? That's not love. That's self-love when you tell people what they want to hear, what their ears are itching to hear, and not tell them the truth in love because of love, even though you know you're putting the relationship in jeopardy, and it's going to wound them.

I love my kids. They tell me, “I wish he didn't love us that much.” He disciplines those whom He loves. That's how we know we're His children, the writer of Hebrews tells us. I wish there was another way, like getting a plaque. I'm a child of God. No chastisement. What's the writer of Hebrews saying? I know you're a child of God because God's giving you a spanking. And parents don't spank other people's kids. So that's how I know you're a child of God. Otherwise, He wouldn't be the one spanking you right now.

Any of you tried spanking somebody else's kids? I don't recommend it. It won't end well. So what's the litmus test by which we know that we're a child of God? Because He chastises those whom He loves. That's what love is.

And here today, we live in a day where we have churches — and I'm almost done — churches that — huge, in abundance — that stay as far away as they can from anything having to do with blood and sin. So they put new labels on it because it's more — it's more seeker-sensitive. It's more user friendly. It's more tolerant. So we don't call adultery “adultery.” We call it an “affair.” Oh, it's just an affair, oh, yes. (Said in unconcerned voice) It was just an affair. No! It's sin! (Shouting) Adultery is sin!

No, it was just an affair. (Stunned sound) Stop! Unless and until you call sin “sin,” it's hands off to God to forgive and cleanse. Get to the cross where that sin was paid for in full. And leave it there. And don't sneak back at 2:00 in the morning and take it back. He paid for it.

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Call it what it is. Don't change the label on it. Because Jesus didn't come to die for our "affairs" or "issues."

You know, I've got some issues. No, you got sin. You know, I'm dealing with some problems. It's sin! And the problem is, left unchecked it can destroy an entire congregation and body of believers. And as God is my witness, I could stand up here — I won't, but I could take no less than an hour and share with you true story after true story of churches that no longer exist, young people that want nothing to do with the Lord, marriages that have been completely decimated, families completely destroyed because it was left unchecked.

Galatians 5:7-9 and then we're done. Are we okay? This is the Apostle Paul, by the Spirit, **"You were running the race so well. Who has held you back from following the truth?"**

What in the world happened to you guys? This is the church that started off in the Spirit but was trying to finish in the flesh.

This false — *verse 8*, **"...it certainly isn't God, for He is the one who called you to freedom."**

So you can't blame God. What happened? Well, there was a false teaching going around that was really devastating these Christians and the churches in the area.

And Paul hits it head on, *verse 9*, **"...this false teaching is [Notice this] a little yeast [Some of your translations render it leaven] yeast that spreads through the whole batch of dough..."**

Just a little bit. It multiplies, it spreads, it grows. You know we talk about cancer. You know what cancer is and why it spreads? It's a cell, a cancer cell in the body that starts attacking and spreading throughout the body. A healthy body comes to the aid when one part of the body is hurting. That's why when you bash your thumb with a hammer, your big toe's going, "Hey! That hurts!" It's way down there. What are you...?

When one part of the body hurts, the whole body feels it. We weep with those who weep. We rejoice with those who rejoice. That's a healthy body. But this is unhealthy and dangerous and deadly. If you leave it unchecked and it spreads, it's only going to take a little bit. Yeast, or leaven, is a type of sin in the Bible in typology. And boy, you let that thing go unchecked; it's going to spread, and it will destroy everything in its wake. And I can, again, I can tell you true story after true story of exactly this.

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Don't be dismissive of this. Sin is multiplying. It's contagious. "Oh, I'm not hurting anybody." No, no. Yes, you are. Yes, you are. I'm going to close with a quote that I've shared before only because I think it just wraps a bow around the whole "why" behind the "what" of sin. Here's the quote. "Sin is not bad because it's forbidden. Sin is forbidden because it's bad." That's not a play on words.

Never imagine God saying, "Thou shalt not because I am God, and I said so!" Okay. God has forbidden us. No, it's more like this, as one authored a book by the title, 'The Tender Commandments,' not the Ten Commandments, from a tender, loving Heavenly Father. It's like I love you so much. I don't want you to have any other gods because they're not going to be there for you. They're no gods at all. Don't bow down and worship them. I mean, you should have gotten tipped off when you started having to carry your god around. I'm the God who carries you. You know you're in trouble when you got to carry your god.

Don't commit adultery. It'll devastate the rest of your life. It'll never be the same. Don't commit murder, not kill, murder. You'll be haunted and hunted for the rest of your life. You know the tenth one? Probably the most interesting one of all is the only one that's inward. All are external, except for covet. Don't covet your neighbor's wife, as attractive as she might be and as nice of a car as she might drive. I had to get one more car in there. Because it will just defile you from the inside out. It's a loving Heavenly Father who is tenderly commanding you and forbidding you to covet. Why?

Because of what covetousness will do to you. It will destroy you. And I can't stand to see that happen to you. I love you enough to warn you and forbid you from that which I know will destroy you. Covetousness is in the heart. Everything, all the other nine, outward. Covetousness, oh, ask Ahithophel. I don't think you'll be able to.

He was, it was said of him when he spoke — he was David's right-hand man — it was as the oracles of God, the word of God. He was David's most trusted advisor and closest friend. And then he turned on him and became bitter and resentful. And he let a root of bitterness grow and sprout and germinate and bear bitter fruit.

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What happened? What? What changed? Well, as it turns out, Uriah the Hittite married to Bathsheba, well, Bathsheba was Ahithophel's granddaughter. And he couldn't let it — God have forgiven him — Ahithophel couldn't.

You know how it ended? He teams up with Absalom. Absalom's killed. Ahithophel, when David doesn't take his advice, he takes his life. And that's how it ends. I don't want to end on that note. I'm so sorry. But I got to end. So what do I do now? Just end? God loves you, and He just... (Chuckling) He wants to protect you.

[Applause]

No, don't do that. That's bad. It's bad. It's going to hurt you. I love you. Is that better?

Okay, Kaponu, come on up. Stand up. Thank you for your patience with me, your grace towards me, and your love for me too. I know you guys love me. I think some of you actually like me too.

Father, thank You. I thank You so much for these precious brothers and sisters of mine that are just so gracious and so patient and forbearing and longsuffering. (Sighing) But this is such a powerful word, fitly spoken for such a time as this, for all of us. No wonder You hate sin because of what sin does to us, Your children, whom You love so much. You want to protect us from needless suffering, unnecessary consequences, and pain. You want to — what parent wants their child to suffer pain? As one said, you're only as happy as your saddest child. I think it grieves Your heart because of Your love.

Lord, will You begin that process, as arduous and tedious as it might be, of the Holy Spirit now taking this to the next level, where it needs to go in its application to our lives? Will You do that, please, Lord? I did my best; I yelled; I spit. Now take it from here, please. Reveal Your love for us in a fresh and new way, fresh fire on the altar of our lives of obedience to You. In Jesus' name. Amen.

[Congregation says, "Amen."]