

Revelation 18
How I Respond To Devastation
Pastor JD Farag

KAPONO: Would you join me as we pray? Oh Lord, thank You so much for this time that we can get together in this beautiful place, Lord, that yes, You just blessed us with, Lord. In this time, Lord, I pray that Holy Spirit, You would lead us in and through Your word, Lord, that You would just speak to us. Lord, would You clear our bodies, our minds of distraction, Lord, Give us an energy and an excitement, Lord, to know Your word.

Would You bless the teaching? Bless Pastor JD. Continue to watch over him and his family, Lord. Give him strength to continue to do Your will, Lord. We are blessed to be here at this church that You have given us, Lord. And so we thank You, Lord, with everything we got. And we ask these things in Your name only, Jesus. We say Amen.

PASTOR JD: Amen and amen. And good morning and welcome. And you can be seated. Good to see you. Glad you're here. Glad you came. Those of you online, we're glad that you're joining with us.

Quick note before I forget because I always forget to remember what I was supposed to remember not to forget. This Thursday, you're in for a treat. Pastor Mac will be teaching, filling in for me. I talked with him earlier this morning about what he's going to be talking about Thursday night. And trust me when I say this; you don't want to miss it. That's all you're getting out of me. It's going to be so good.

Now, you might be wondering, asking yourself, why is it, Pastor JD, that you will not be here Thursday night? Well, I'm glad you asked. It's my daughter's 18th birthday. Yeah. So being the godly husband and father and, you know, that I am, so meek and humble and... How am I doing? This isn't believable, is it? I just want to spend the time with my daughter. The 18th only comes around once, and it comes around fast, doesn't it? I think I was just changing her diapers yesterday, and then she was asking for the car keys. What happened? Anyway, so, it's going to be just some time together with my bride and my daughter. And Mac has graciously, offered to fill in for me. And I believe he's got a powerful word from the Lord that will be a great encouragement to all of us, myself included. So looking forward to what he has to share.

All right. Well, that brings us to *Revelation 18*, emphasis added. You know we're almost done with this thing. We're almost rid of Babylon. In fact, today she's going down big time.

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I think we still have one more week, Lord willing, next Sunday, beginning in *verse 20* and ending in *verse 24*, and then we are done with this chapter.

I don't want to sound — I hope that didn't come off wrong. I mean, I love God's word, but there are some parts in God's word that are a little bit tougher and harder and more difficult and... but they're very important. So now because the text is a little bit longer than usual, I'll just invite you to stand if you want. If not, just where you're seated is fine. No problem. Just follow along. I'll read the text first.

John is writing, by the Holy Spirit, and he says, *verse 9*, **“When the kings of the earth who committed adultery with her and shared her luxury see the smoke of her burning, they will weep and mourn over her.**

Terrified [*Verse 10*] at her torment, they will stand far off and cry: “Woe! Woe to you, great city, you mighty city of Babylon! In one hour your doom has come!”

“The merchants of the earth [*Verse 11*] will weep and mourn over her [Why?] because no one buys their cargoes anymore — [*Commencing in verse 12, we have quite a list of luxurious treasures*] cargoes of gold, silver, precious stones, and pearls; fine linen, purple, silk, and scarlet cloth; [*Very expensive stuff*] every sort of citron wood, and articles of every kind made of ivory, costly wood, bronze, iron, and marble; cargoes of cinnamon and spice [*Rare*], of incense, myrrh, and frankincense [*Sounds familiar*], of wine and olive oil, of fine flour [*This ain't the cheap stuff*] and wheat; cattle and sheep; horses and carriages; and [*This is tough*] human beings sold as slaves.

[*Verse 14*] “They will say, ‘The fruit you longed for is gone from you. All your luxury and splendor have vanished, never to be recovered.’ The merchants [*Verse 15*] who sold these things and gained their wealth from her will stand far off, terrified at her torment. They will weep and mourn and cry out: “Woe! Woe to you, great city, dressed in fine linen, purple and scarlet, and glittering with gold, precious stones, and pearls!

In one hour [*Verse 17*] such great wealth has been brought to ruin!” “Every sea captain, and all who travel by ship, the sailors, and all who earn their living from the sea, will stand far off. When they see the smoke of her burning, [*Verse 18*] they will exclaim, ‘Was there ever a city like this great city?’ They will throw dust on their heads, [*A customary sign of*

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mourning outwardly] and with weeping and mourning cry out: **“Woe! Woe to you, great city, where all who had ships on the sea became rich through her wealth! In one hour she has been brought to ruin!”**

If I yell, it's because of the rain. That's my story, and I'm sticking with it. But let's pray.

Father, thank You for Your word and particularly this portion that we have before us here in Your word this morning. Lord, we readily admit that we, absent the Holy Spirit, will have little to no hope of being able to understand how a text like this applies to our lives. Unless the Holy Spirit gives us eyes of understanding, and supple hearts to receive, and open ears to hear, and eyes to see, then our time together in Your word today will be a waste of time. And I can't believe there's a one of us here that wants that.

That's why we're here. We come with a thirst, a hunger that we know that only You can satiate. So will You do that, Lord, in and through Your word, by Your Holy Spirit? Speak, Lord. Your servants are listening. We pray in Jesus' name. Amen and amen. You can be seated. Thank you for those of you that stood. And if you see anybody building this big ark, let me know.

Okay, so what I want to talk with you about today is how it is that I respond when hit with a situation that's catastrophic, causing devastation. Let me get this out of the way, right out of the chute. There are going to be times to weep. There's a time to laugh, a time to weep, time to rejoice. Life is hard, but God is good. When somebody asks you, how's life treating you? You can tell him that life is treating me horribly. But God is good.

I don't want in any way to come off as, Hey, man, get over it. Buck up. Because there are those times in life where you're just laid out when the bottom falls out, and it's during those times, more than at any other time in our Christian life that — and I love that hymn. ♪ Oh, I need Thee, Lord. Every hour I need Thee ♪

It's during those times that you need the Lord more than at any other time, as you navigate your way through the difficulty, the pain, the devastation caused by your situation. So I don't want to be dismissive of it. However, I do want to talk about it, specifically the reasons why I respond the way I do. And here's why.

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Because my response can, in large measure, become a thermometer of sorts, that takes my spiritual temperature. Now, again, please don't misunderstand me. There are going to be times, more often than not, especially in these last days, that are just going to be so hard they just bring you to your face. And your response may be even surprising to yourself. I mean, you just falter and fail and break down. There's nothing wrong with that. Jesus wept. The Apostle Paul despaired of life.

There were times, man, whenever I would throw myself a pity party that nobody shows up to anyway and feel sorry for myself. All I have to do is just go into the epistles of Paul, and I'm like, shame on me. I got a hangnail compared to what Paul went through. Puts it into perspective, a much-needed perspective.

So I guess what I'm trying to say, and please don't miss this because if you miss this, then what I'm going to share with you today will maybe not be received in the spirit in which it was intended to. You might be going through a difficult situation and the ensuing devastation. And I want to encourage you because God knows, and God's still there, and He's still in it, and God still has a plan. He just hasn't let you in on it because He knows that if He does, you'll just try to help Him, and you'll make it worse.

Maybe I should just speak for myself. I didn't get a witness on that one, so that's fine. So it's called faith, believe it or not. What a novel idea. "The righteous shall live by faith" [*Walk by faith*].

But see, our flesh chafes against that because we don't want to walk by faith. We want to walk by sight. I want to see. Because after all, seeing is believing. It's the opposite in God's economy. Jesus said, believe and you'll see. It's not seeing is believing. It's believing is seeing. So you can't see your way out of this. That's by God's design, so that you really have no other alternative but to put your trust in Him, have faith in Him, wait on Him.

I think of *Psalms 27:13*. And we will get to our study. *Psalms 27:13-14*. David, I mean, in a rare moment of candor, has — sits himself down and has a talk with himself. Sit down, boy! This is different than self-talk. This is no, I need to talk with you. We need to talk. Why are you so — *Psalms 42:43* — **"Why are you in such despair?"** He's talking to himself. **"Why are you so downcast? You will yet again have reason to praise the Lord."**

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Psalm 27:13-14, in a very open and candid penning of that psalm, he says, I was just about ready to throw in the towel. I mean, I would have completely lost heart had it not been for my confidence that remained in the Lord. And then he starts — he's going — he's having — if you see people talking to themselves, don't try to get them institutionalized, please. Because they're probably talking to the Lord and themselves. He says to himself, be of good courage, be strong, take heart, and wait on the Lord, and you will see the goodness of the Lord in the land of the living.

Now already I've got a problem because there's a couple of words in there that I'm not too fond of, chief of which is the word “wait.” I don't want to wait. I want to see it now.

“No. Just wait. You'll see.”

“Can we skip “the just wait” and get right to “the see”?”

“No. Just wait. You'll see. You'll see what I'm going to do.”

“I don't know. I don't know how You're going to do it. I don't know the way You're going to do it. By faith I trust that You're going to do it. But please, Lord, don't take too long to do it.”

Because you know God operates outside of time, and He's not subject to our schedule and our timeline and time frame and deadline. And by the way, don't email Him and say, “Hey, can we meet this deadline? Can we get this done by this time?”

No, He'll do it in His time, for His glory, His way. And His ways are always better. In fact, when He does it, not if, when, it's like one of these.

“Oh! Ha! No way!”

To which God responds, “Way!”

“No way!”

“Way! My ways aren't your ways.”

And then you're looking at your measly, you know, small, itsy-bitsy plans that you, you know, wanted to email God for Him to bless.

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Oh, come on, let's be honest. We set out our course. We make our plans, and then we pray, and we ask God to bless our plans. And God's like, that's all you got? That's it? You pray too small. Why are your prayers so small when your God is so big?

You know, in the Gospels, when Jesus would say to the disciples on several occasions, **“Why did you doubt?” “Oh, ye of little faith.”** Never imagine that there was a disdain or disgust in the tone on the part of the Savior. No, it was pity. It was like, what? Why would you doubt? Why is your faith so little when your God is so big, man?

You bring Me your small plan, man. And I'm sorry, it's adorable, and I laugh and I chuckle because it's adorable, but if you only knew what I was going to do, you'd shred that thing in the shredder like, right now because it doesn't even compare.

So please, I don't want to make light of your situation that's causing devastation. I just want to be of encouragement to you today. And I want to kind of focus in on when, not if, when adversity strikes, catastrophe hits, and devastation ensues. How do I respond?

What I'm hoping to accomplish in today's sermon is invite the Holy Spirit to have unfettered access to all of our hearts, mine included, in this regard, and here's why. If I will, the Holy Spirit will then search my heart to try me, know my anxiety, and see if there's any wicked way in me. That's *Psalm 139:23-24*. David penned that Psalm. **“Search my heart, O God.”**

We've written contemporary worship and praise songs based on the psalms, which are — psalms are songs. You know that, right? They were sung. Search my heart O God. See if there be any... And allow Him access to the deep recesses in your heart. You know what I'm talking about? Because the Lord sees the heart. The Lord knows the heart. We only know and see the outward appearance.

By the way, you all look marvelous today, outwardly. But God sees your heart inwardly. That's a whole different world. He sees the anxiety in your heart. Maybe He sees the bitterness in your heart, the unforgiveness, the resentment.

But He won't force Himself. He has to be invited. We talked about that at our last prayer meeting. He has to be invited. And he'll RSVP guaranteed. He'll RSVP. He's just waiting. The only reason He hasn't is because He wasn't invited. So as soon as you invite Him, He RSVPs. “I'm there.”

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And He's the first one there. You know those that — those that are fashionably late? Well, the Holy Spirit is never fashionably late. He's holy early. And He shows up, and you give Him unfettered access. You say, okay, Lord. He's very gentle. He's the Good Shepherd. He's very gentle. And He'll just gently put His finger on that one area in my heart that has taken up residence in my life.

And He'll say, "Is it okay if I take this out? It's going to hurt." But just like you would want a surgeon to cut cancer cells out of your body, so to do you want the Great Physician, by way of the Holy Spirit, to cut out from you that which could kill you and destroy you.

I'm telling you, if it gets louder, I'll just yell louder. (Pouring rain outside)

I'm going to pose three questions. (Yelling) Sorry. I got your attention again. I was losing a few of you. You're back. Welcome back. Good to see you.

I'm going to pose three questions. Okay? They are from our text in the context of the fall of Babylon and its personal application to our lives. Because again, understand that our approach to teaching verse-by-verse through *Revelation* is focused more on the personal application than it is to prophetic information because we cover all of that in our Prophecy Updates. So this is more about how does Babylon falling in one hour apply to me during this hour.

That, of course, presupposes that I'm going to keep it under an hour. I will. Here's the first question. It's in *verses 9-11*. Is my sorrow worldly or godly?

Here, John writes that the kings and the merchants of the earth weep and mourn. But what are they weeping and mourning over? The fall and doom of Babylon, which comes in one hour.

Wait, there's great sorrow, weeping, mourning. They're throwing ashes on themselves outwardly. But why are they weeping and from what comes this great sorrow? It's a worldly sorrow. Why are they so greatly sorrowed? Because they will no longer be able to buy and sell and make a lot of money. Because Babylon had great wealth, and from Babylon they amassed great wealth.

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And Babylon has fallen, and now all that wealth is gone with it. There's a lesson right there. There's this one proverb. Let me have this one. It's one of my favorite proverbs, like all the proverbs are my favorite proverbs, but this one in particular because I love the picture it paints on the canvas of Scripture. I'm going to paraphrase it. It basically goes like this: Don't fix your eyes on your wealth. Don't, you know, start focusing in on the money that you have or the materialist — materialism or wealth or the car that you drive. Because it doesn't matter what car you drive, it's what drives you. It doesn't matter how much money you have. It's does that money have you?

So this isn't an indictment against wealth and prosperity. God's a blessing and prospering God. But if the wealth becomes your god, then that's Matthew 6. You can't serve both. So they're grieving. They're wailing in sorrow because it's game over. It's lights out. Babylon has fallen and in one hour has met its doom. And they knew that they were doomed too. That's a godly so — that's a worldly sorrow of losing worldly wealth. You know, James talks about it.

Paul does in *2 Corinthians 7:7-11*, probably, arguably the best job at explaining the differences between a worldly sorrow or a godly sorrow. Let me see if I can just summarize it and simplify it. Godly sorrow leads to a genuine repentance. Repentance in the Greek is *metanoia*, which is change = meta, mind = noia. It's a changing of one's mind. So if I'm truly sorry and it's a genuine sorrow and a godly sorrow, it'll be evidenced by a genuine change.

Example. I'm going to use a traffic illustration, so build a bridge and get over it. I get pulled over by a police officer for exceeding the speed limit, which I want you to know I haven't had in some 30-plus years because I'm such a law-abiding citizen. No, that means I just never got caught. And if I did, they let me off. Anyway, that's another... I'm going — I'm — I'm exposing too much here.

So I get pulled over. What's the first thing? “Do you know how fast you're going?” “No. I'm sorry.” What are you sorry for? You're sorry that you got caught. That's not — Because if it was a godly sorrow, you would change how fast you drive, you're driving habits. Because a godly sorrow leads to genuine repentance. You change. You change your mind.

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The worldly sorrow is the sorrow of being found out. The sorrow of being pulled over. The sorrow of getting caught. I mean, it's a worldly sorrow, and the fruit of that does not lead to a genuine repentance. There's no remorse. You're mourning the loss of worldly riches and possessions.

So catastrophe hits. Devastation ensues. The sorrow just is palpable. Sorrow fills your heart. Grief. Is it worldly or is it godly in the sense that am I grieving because of the loss of — and again, please don't misunderstand me. I mean, there are going to be times where we lose someone dear to us, and it causes great sorrow, piercing pain. I've drank from that cup. I am in no way referring to that.

I'm talking about the difference between a worldly sorrow that says, man, where am I going to make that kind of money again? Can't be Babylon. That's gone. That's a worldly sorrow over worldly loss. Godly sorrow, conversely, is the sorrow that fills your heart for grieving the heart of God.

You know when we're told of David that he was a man after God's own heart, do you know what that really means? That he had God's heart. His heart was God's heart, after God's heart. In other words, the things that grieved the heart of God grieved his heart, too because he had a heart after God's own heart.

And by the way, in the Proverbs where we're told that the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom, you know that is a very misunderstood and powerful proverb. Because the fear of the Lord, we're also told in Proverbs, is to hate evil. Stay with me on this. Please don't miss this.

The fear of the Lord is not like, I fear God! We talked about this Thursday night. I would really encourage you, if you're living your Christian life on a merit-based relationship instead of a grace-based relationship, I would really encourage you to watch or listen to Thursday night's teaching in *Nahum Chapter 2*, the beginning part of it. It's called meritorious Christianity, where we think that if I'm a good little boy, then God's going to bless me. If I'm a bad little boy, I'm going to get me one spanking. Well, that's works. That's merit based. No, that's not love. I'm saved by grace, not merit, not works.

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So the fear of the Lord is to hate evil means I fear breaking the heart of God with doing anything — I fear doing anything that would hurt God's heart. And God hates evil. And it grieves Him, it grieves His heart. It breaks His heart. It saddens His heart. And if I fear doing anything that would grieve the Lord.

I love my wife. I fear doing anything that would hurt her. I fear the Lord. I fear doing anything that would hurt His heart. I don't want to hurt God's heart. I want to bless God's heart. I want to be a blessing. I want Him, when He looks down on me, I want Him to go, "that's My boy," instead of, "I never seen that guy before in my life. I don't know who he is." (Chuckling) I want to be a blessing to Him, not a burden on Him or a grief to Him.

And here's the other thing about godly sorrow. It always bears good fruit. It always bears good fruit. If it's genuine sorrow, godly sorrow, it will always germinate and sprout and bring about good, godly fruit of the Holy Spirit. Love. Joy. Peace. Gentleness. Goodness. Meekness. Patience and self-control.

Notice it's not plural, the fruits of the Holy Spirit. No, it's the fruit, singular, of the Holy Spirit, which is love. And from love comes that joy and peace and goodness and meekness. But it's always good and godly fruit. And that's how you can delineate between a godly sorrow and a worldly sorrow.

Because see, with a worldly sorrow, you know, there's no change, there's no remorse, there's no — there's no conviction, not condemnation. It bears repeating. But the way to know the difference between condemnation and conviction is that condemnation drives me further away from the Lord, whereas conviction brings me closer and nearer to the Lord. And James said, if you draw near to God, He'll draw near to you. And that's the gentle, still, whisper of the Holy Spirit.

Remember that commercial? This is going to date me. Young people, just let us have this. It was a shampoo commercial. (Whispering) If you want to get somebody's attention, whisper. Oh, what, what, what? The proverbs — they steal it. It's plagiarism. It's wholesale plagiarism on the part of the world. Everything they stole out of the Bible, they hijacked it. I know Arabs shouldn't use the word "hijack." But they steal it, they plagiarize it, and then they reframe it, you know, and phrase it, and then they make it sound like they came up

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with it. They didn't. No. A soft answer breaks a bone. You want to get somebody's attention? Whisper. A gentle word breaks a bone.

I mean, and that's what the Holy Spirit does. And it's a good breaking because there's that "I" in me. It's in you too, so don't look at me all spiritual like that. "I" as one aptly noted, is right smack in the middle of the word "pride" and "sin." And how about this one, "Lucifer." I will ascend my throne above the Most High. Ai yai yai!

I love Roy Hession in his work 'The Calvary Road.' Not for the faint of heart. My wife and I have used it as a devotional over the decades. It's not a writing — it's called 'The Calvary Road.' It's not the one, the writing that you walk away from with the warm fuzzies. You walk away from it going, oh, God!

Example. He draws a fabulous illustration from some of these remote jungles where they have these snakes. Aren't you glad we don't have any snakes on the island here? I've lost half of you, just with that, it looks. But he was likening the snake to the worm. Who likened Himself as unto a worm? Jesus the Christ, the scarlet worm that would die on a tree emitting a scarlet fluid that would then turn pure white when this worm died on the tree. Did you catch that? **"Though our sins be as scarlet, He'll make them white as snow."**

The tree: **"Cursed is any man who dies on a tree."** The cross was the tree that He, as that worm, died on. And though our sins were as scarlet, He made them white as snow. So Hession — it's so uncomfortable. It's not reading you enjoy. It's reading you endure.

So he says, we're too much like the snake and not like the worm. You step on the snake. Look out! (Loud hissing) I do that too good, maybe. But I mean, step on the worm. What happens? It breaks. He says the "I" is a bent "C." The "I" in me needs to be bent to become a "C," more like Christ.

I am my own worst enemy. You've heard that phrase. I think that is so true. Do you realize that when you're looking at yourself in the mirror, which I try not to do, especially the older I get. It's not a pretty picture. I just pray: Jesus come quickly. I can't wait for my new body and my new face. I wonder what... Never mind. But do you realize that when you're looking at yourself in the mirror, you're staring right into the face of the enemy.

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I did this one time. Don't look at me differently. I hope you won't. I just, I looked at myself in the mirror and I said, "I'm on to you! I on — no! I know what you're doing." It's me I'm talking to.

[Laughter]

I'm my own worst enemy. I mean, the enemy's the enemy. But I'm very cooperative with the enemy.

You know that saying; we talked about it in the Prophecy Update. That old sitcom is going to date me again. But you know, "The devil made me do it." That's not true. The devil can't make you do anything. You have to cooperate with him for him to do anything. So nice try.

And by the way, it's not the devil, it's his minions. Because the devil is not omnipresent. He cannot be all places at all times. Only God can. That's why everything has to be centralized in the end, prophetically.

So when someone says, "Man, the devil's been tanning my hide this last week," I'm like, "Whoa, the devil! Wow. How do you rate? Because he can only be one place at one time. Apparently, he was at your address."

No, it's not the devil. It's his minions. It's the demons. It's the entities that Paul delineates in *Ephesians 6:4*, different ranking, spiritual forces of wickedness in high places in the unseen demonic realm.

Pastor, where are you going with this? Well, I think it would be good and we would do well to, introspectively again, allow the Holy Spirit to search our hearts and see if the sorrow is godly, leading to a genuine repentance. Or is it worldly? I'm just mourning the loss of something that matters not for eternity.

Here's the second one in *verses 12-14*, and it's — I'm couching this this way for a reason. I'll explain why in a moment. Is my heart earthly or heavenly? This is quite a list of very expensive and costly luxuries. These were moneymakers, these merchants that were trading and trafficking in these goods, that we have a seemingly endless list of, my goodness, the splendor of it all, the amount of it all, glittering gold, massive gold. And that's the thing that it starts with in listing all of these luxuries. Gold, the most valuable of all.

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But you know what it ends with, sadly, is the most tragic of all. And it's happening today: Human and sex trafficking. You know we support a ministry in Nepal for sex and human-trafficked girls and women and even boys. And it's getting worse. And when you get to this chapter in *Revelation*, and it's yet future, by the way, and you see what's happening now, and you see what's going to happen then, there's not a very big gap between the two, if you know what I mean. We're already beginning to see it come to pass.

And Jesus said as much. **“I'm going to tell you what's going to happen before it happens, so when it happens, you will believe that I am the I Am.”** No other religious writing can do that or wouldn't dare do that. Why? Because God is the only one who knows the end from the beginning. He's omniscient, all-knowing.

So I mean, if we're already seeing this, which, by the way, what we talked about in the Prophecy Update. They're trying to rebuild the Tower of Babel. They're trying to rebuild Babylon, reverse what happened at the Tower of Babel when the world was one. And God said we better get down there because there will be no limit to the evil inclinations of their heart, the imaginations, the inventions of evil and wickedness, unspeakable, unthinkable. So they went down, and they confused their languages and scattered them across the face of the earth.

And now what's man trying to do? See, the Tower of Babel represents rebellion against God, wanting to be like God, and be God instead of God, without God. But God says, nice try. It ain't going to happen. And He brings it crashing down, just like He did with the Tower of Babel.

So let's get back to the question that's on the table of where's my heart? Note *verse 14*, where they mourn because the fruit of Babylon they longed for, they ached for, they yearned for is gone. And the luxury and splendor they love has vanished, never to be recovered ever, ever again. Ever. Did I say ever?

Wait a minute. I'm one of these merchants. I'm one of these kings. I'm one of these people that made a lot of money off of Babylon. And that's where all my treasure was. It was a treasure chest for me. And now it's gone. Jesus in *Matthew 6:21* said, **“Where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.”**

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Notice He didn't say where your heart is, that's where your treasure is going to be. No, show me where a man's treasure truly lies, and I'll show you where his heart truly is. And see, if we've dug down our roots too deep into the temporal soil of this fallen world, and we've laid up for ourselves treasures on earth where moth and rust destroy, and thieves and the IRS come in and steal and that kind of stuff, instead of laying up for ourselves treasures in heaven where moth and rust can't touch it, thieves can't get to them, rust can't destroy them, and oh, by the way, if that's where your portfolio is, that's where your investments are, that's where your treasure is. (Laughing)

Talk about an investment. You know what the yield is? I mean, forget 6%. Pfff. 10% yield. You know crypto's crazy, right? So you know, 100%. Yeah. Pfff! Sorry. I didn't mean to spit on everybody. No, not even close.

You can't take it with you because you've never seen a U-Haul behind a hearse. Right? But you can sure send it ahead. And it's protected. It's the safest long-term investment you could possibly make, 100% failproof. And the yield is out of this world, literally. It multiplies. Compounded interest. Some of you know about that.

It works both ways. That's why you should never carry a balance on your credit cards. You're paying interest on top of interest. Investors earn interest on top of interest, compounded interest. Well, even that pales in comparison to the treasures that we lay up in heaven.

that's what Jesus is saying. That's what I love about the word of God and the God of the word, is that God will never call us or command us to do anything without enabling and empowering us to obey it, and also give us an alternative to it. So instead of laying up for yourselves treasures on earth, lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven. It's a much safer investment. You don't have to pay any taxes on it. No capital gains taxes, man. No taxes. No, you don't need to fill out any paperwork. You can send it ahead.

And when you get there and you hear those words that we all long to hear, "Well done, good and faithful servant. Enter in," and you're gonna see your investment portfolio and cash in. It's not what you think. I mean, it reminds me of the fictitious story — it's

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humorous. It's a humorous quip just to kind of lighten it up a little bit. You're kind of getting serious on me.

This guy shows up at heaven, and, you know, he dies. He's absent from the body and present with the Lord. And he takes gold bars that he had amassed with him. He's got his arms stacked with gold bars. And Jesus looks at him and goes, "Why did you bring asphalt?"

I hope you got that because in heaven the streets are paved with gold.

"That's asphalt. We don't need that. We paved the streets of heaven with that. What were you thinking?"

"I wasn't."

"Apparently not."

Well, listen, I need to bring this in for a landing, if for no other reason other than I told my wife I would. Last question. (Chuckling) *Verses 15* — I'm a — I'm a godly husband. So *verses 15-19*.

Question number 3: Is my focus temporal or eternal? Now watch this. In these verses, John describes the response of both the land and sea merchants who stand far off. That's interesting. And they're terrified. That's even more interesting. What are they terrified about? Babylon's torment. In *verses 17 and 19*, we're told they also weep, mourn, and cry out. Why? Because in one hour all the wealth of Babylon is brought to ruin. Here's the takeaway. Let go of this world, the things of this world. This world is passing away. That means it's dying.

When our daughter Noelle was born, she was going to die. We didn't know when. We didn't know how. We just knew that she was passing away. And she did. The world is dying. Why are you investing in something that's dying? Why are you laying up treasures in something that's going to die? It's on it's deathbed.

Where's your focus? Are you focusing on the temporal, or are you focusing on the eternal? You know, Isaiah said, "**He will keep him in perfect [Perfect] peace, whose mind is stayed on Thee.**"

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My eyes are on Jesus. My mind is on Him. My treasure is there. My heart is there because my treasure is there. And I'm done with this world. I wonder — and I'll close now. But I wonder, I wonder. I'm just being open with you. I muse over things like this. I wonder about things like this. I wonder if we as God's people have, instead of loosening our grip on the temporal, we've, in fact, done the opposite and tightened our grip on it.

You want to keep your life? Lose it. It's the paradox of our Christian faith. A paradox. Oxymoron. You know, jumbo shrimp. Microsoft Works. (Chuckle) I had to throw that one in.

It's paradoxical. It's diametrically opposed.

You know; the way up is the way down.

You want to live? Die.

You want to follow Me? Pick up your cross, deny yourself, die to yourself.

That's the other thing Hession brings out in his book, 'The Calvary Road' is he — man, it's so convicting. He brings up the self, self-consciousness. When I'm so self-conscious, what am I saying? Self hasn't died. Because see, if self is dead, it's not conscious of self. I'm not — there's no self-consciousness.

I've died to self. And I've died in this world and the things of it. And I am so over this world. I've been over this world for... well, that's another sermon for another time. I'm just so over it. But I think that's God's design, isn't it? You know, these Prophecy Updates we've been doing for over two decades now — can you believe that? I can't. But it's had this much-needed effect of loosening the ever-tightening grip that we have on this fallen world.

Babylon is fallen. Why are you trying to hold on to it? Why are you trying to invest in it? Why are you laying up treasures in it? Why are you focusing on it? It's gone, never to return. We're going to see that spill over in the next week, big time. I think God allows the devastation, if for no other reason than to remind us that we live in a fallen, temporal world that is dying.

And it brings that back to the forefront because we tend to forget. This world's not our home, man. We long ago overstayed our welcome in this world, not our home. And by the

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way, it should come as no surprise that the world hates your guts. Stop sending them a friend request. Jesus said that they would hate you because of your association with Him. Don't take it personally. **“They hate you because they hated Me first.”**

What they really hate is Jesus in you because Jesus in you exposes what's in them. That's what they hate. That's why when you say the name of Jesus, the air stops in the room. Everybody stands to attention and starts, you know, behaving themselves and stop swearing. “Excuse my French.”

“Brah, that was not French. My dad taught French. That was not French. But you're excused.” It changes the whole complexion. Why? Because you just proclaimed **“...the only name above all names given among men whereby we must be saved.”**

That's the name that I want to be associated with, identified by, and put my trust in, not this world. I got the long view, like really long, like for all eternity. So it changes my priorities and how I live my life in this world.

And sometimes I find myself — and I'm done. This is my final closing. I ask myself this question. What will this matter in eternity? What will this do for eternity? It's self-examination. It's introspection. It's allowing the Holy Spirit to search your heart. I wonder how much time — you know, “I don't have time to pray.”

“You don't have time not to pray.”

“I don't have time to read the word of God.”

“You don't have time not to read the word of God.”

You know, we'll always make time for that which we value and prioritize. So obviously, you don't have the time. You don't make the time because you don't value that as a priority. Okay, I'm really convicted now, so I'm going to close. How abrupt is that? Come on up, Kapono. You're used to it. You're always ready for it. Stand up. We'll close in prayer and song. That's the smoothest closing you're ever going to get out of me to end the sermon. I'm trying. I'm working on it. Pray for me.

Father, (Sigh) who knew that a prophecy and passage in the Book of *Revelation* could have such application? But it does. It does. Lord, take it from here, please. And don't let us fight

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You because we'll try. Lord, there has to be a transaction in our hearts between You and us because it's a matter of the heart. Lord, get the world out of us. You got Israel out of Egypt, but You couldn't get the Egypt out of Israel. You delivered us out of the world, but we still got some of us that's still in the world.

Please, God, would You, as you're always so gentle to just identify it and please remove it. Don't make it hurt too bad, our minds, our focus, our hearts, Oh, God, please. We want to be numbered amongst those of whom it is said they love the Lord their God with all their heart, soul, mind, body, strength, everything. So be it, Lord. Thank You, Jesus. In Jesus' name, Amen.