

Revelation 17 – The Fall of Babylon – Part 1

We are picking up in chapter **17** of the last book of the Bible.

Revelation 6 started the countdown of the 7 last years of history prior to the second coming of Jesus.

This 7-year period of time is set forth for us in the **9th** chapter of **Daniel**, which was written circa 6th century B.C.

In **Revelation 11-14** the chronological flow of that 7-year period was put on hold.

And as we walked through them what we were looking at was –

The Holy Spirit backfilling for us details of the events that will precede the last 3 ½ years of that 7-year period of time; Which we've noted on a number of occasions is the most documented & referenced period of time in all of the Bible.

In chapters **15 & 16** the chronology of events resumed.

Chapter **17 & 18** again will not advance that chronology. Instead we're given the details of the fall of Babylon.

In the margin of your Bible there right at the front end of chapter **17** would you put **Revelation 14:8**.

There the fall of Babylon was predicted. And also at the end of **Revelation 16** we read how Babylon is levelled in the last judgment poured out on the world in the form of an incomprehensible global earthquake.

In **Revelation 17 & 18** we have given to us in detail the fall of Babylon.

So the big question for us is what or where is Babylon?

So before we dive into that I want us to bow our heads and hearts before the Lord in a word of prayer that the Holy Spirit would be our teacher tonight.

Father, we thank you for the gracious promise of the Holy Spirit to lead us into truth. And, Lord, we know we're walking through portions of your Word that have had various views attached to them. They've been understood in various ways. But, Lord, we're ready to bow our hearts, and say, "You're the author of this great book." We bow our heart before you, and we just say, "Thank you for inspiring this book." And we would ask now that the Holy Spirit would minister the truth of your Word to each of our hearts. And, Lord, we pray that our hearts would not only be opened to the work of the Holy Spirit; but, Lord, we pray that you would open your Word up to our hearts. And we thank you for the promise that the unfolding of your words brings light, gives understanding to the simple. Holy Spirit, we pray that you would shine into each of our hearts the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus. For everything you want to do please overlook my inadequacies as a man and as a teacher so that your Word would go forth in the demonstration of the Holy Spirit and of power in the saving of souls and the building up of the body of Christ, equipping men and women for the work of the ministry, all to the glory of the name of Jesus. For it's in his wonderful name we pray, amen.

What or Where is Babylon?

Let me begin with this – In a spiritual sense the Bible has been a tale of two cities – from **Genesis** to **Revelation**. Babylon is mentioned 287 times in the Scriptures.

That is more than any other city except for one other city – Jerusalem.

At the heart of this tale of two cities is the great conflict that we studied in depth in **Revelation 12**.

And at the core of that great conflict is the matter of worship.

And time and again as we've been working our way through the book of **Revelation**, and also in our study '[Infinite Worth – Realities of Worship and Idolatry](#)', we've been learning that every human being is a worshipper. We are constantly pouring out – We were made to pour out – We are constantly pouring out our affections and ambitions in a primary direction. Every one of us has a primary direction that we're pouring out. Whatever is at the end of that flow of pouring out of all that we are and all that we do, all that we could ever hope to become – that thing is the object of our worship. Worship has an object. It's so very important we understand that. And whatever it is that is the object of our worship – that thing, that person is our functional god.

It's no mistake that Babylon here in chapter **17** is labelled a "**prostitute**". Throughout the Bible God speaks of his relationship with Israel, and later his relationship with the Church in terms of marriage. And that's why whenever Israel or the Church compromises their relationship with God the Holy Spirit inspires the use of particular words to talk about that, to describe that. And God the Holy Spirit labels that compromised relationship as adultery and fornication in a spiritual sense. Idolatry is like replacing your spouse with another lover in your relationship with God.

We are espoused to the Lord as Christians. The Bible says that the Church is the Bride of Christ. In the Old Testament God would constantly say that he espoused himself to the nation of Israel. And when Israel was unfaithful it was labelled in terms like harlotry, whoredom, fornication. And so it's no mistake that this thing, this place, Babylon – which, by the way, it is a thing and it is a place – It's given the title “**prostitute**”.

Now we know that Babylon was a literal city on the Euphrates.

Merrill Tenney, in his commentary on the book of **Revelation**, makes this observation – “**Genesis 11:1-10 shows that right after the flood Babylon was the seat of the civilization that expressed organized hostility towards God.**”

Babylon later in history was the capitol of empire that conquered with great cruelty the Southern Kingdom of Judah.

Again quoting **Tenney**, he says – “*Babylon to the Jews was the essence of all evil, the embodiment of cruelty, the foe of God's people, and the lasting type of sin, carnality, lust and greed.*”

So what we want to understand is –

Yes, Babylon was a location on a map, a city. It had a geographical location.

But we need to understand that –

Babylon transcends a location on a map.

Babylon is bigger than **Revelation 17, 18**. It's bigger than the antichrist's reign.

Babylon refers to all idolatry, all blasphemy, all persecution of God's people throughout history and across all cultures.

Babylon was present in John's day, most radiantly expressed in John's day by way of Rome.

Babylon is present in our day and throughout history as the world system that is organizing itself without God and against God.

But under the antichrist, Babylon, in both its religious and commercial aspects, holds sway over the Earth as never before until we see it judged by God in the **17th** chapter of the book of **Revelation**.

Religious Babylon came into being long before Christianity. But even then, going all the way back to **Genesis 11**, it presented a satanic counterfeit of the coming true Messiah. According to religious history, religious legend, the Babylonian religion was founded by the wife of Nimrod. Nimrod was a great grandson of Noah. Nimrod's wife was named Semiramis. She was the high-priestess of idol worship. Semiramis gave birth to a son who she claimed was miraculously conceived. The son was named Tammuz. And he was considered in their culture as a savior. Many ancient artefacts remain which predated Christianity with the familiar motif of the mother Semiramis holding the infant savior Tammuz. It's also said that Tammuz was killed by a wild beast, and then miraculously brought back to life. So remember in the book of **Revelation** we saw that Satan has his counterfeit. There is a counterfeit satanic trinity. And all the way back to **Genesis 11** the counterfeit of the true Messiah is presented in this place Babylon. We read of Baal constantly in the Old Testament. He was the local Canaanite name for the Babylonian Tammuz.

The Bible makes specific mention of some of the components of religious Babylon. Write these down – In **Ezekiel 8:14** Ezekiel protests against the ceremony of weeping for Tammuz.

In **Jeremiah 7:18** Jeremiah makes mention of the practice of making cakes for the queen of heaven.

And what's really amazing, if you don't know the context for that –

People would leave the temple precincts, then go home and make cakes for the queen of heaven.

Wow! It would be like people going to church on a Sunday, and then go living for an idol the rest of the week.

In **Jeremiah 44:17-19, 25** Jeremiah mentions offering incense to the queen of heaven.

So with all of that in mind – here we go –

“**1 Then one of the seven angels who had the seven bowls came and said to me, “Come, I will show you the judgment of the great prostitute who is seated on many waters,”**”

So John is going to be taken to vantage point where he will see, by God's enabling – He is going to watch the judgment of religious Babylon.

Now this is really important – Whether we get all of the details right, or whether we agree on everything, the point is that in this chapter we see God bringing final judgment upon this ancient spiritual opposition to the worship of the true and living God. There is a trajectory in human history towards God judging this ancient spiritual opposition to true worship. That's the big picture. We can differ on the details. And as we read this chapter you might think, '*What are we getting into here in this chapter?*' So let's try to make our way through some of them.

“the great prostitute who is seated on many waters”

What does that mean? Well, look at verse 15.

We've said that the Bible is always the best commentary on the Bible.

“¹⁵ And the angel said to me, “The waters that you saw, where the prostitute is seated, are peoples and multitudes and nations and languages.”

So John is going to see the judgment of this false religious system at the point of its greatest influence.

He's saying that it has influenced world empires in the past. The Bible says that.

But in the last days when judgment comes upon it, she, this religious Babylon, is going to have global influence.

In the past world empires were influenced by this Babylonian system of false worship.

But in the last days right before she is judged she is going to have global influence.

Spiritual Babylon will have morphed into the world's religion – The First Church of the Beast (if you would).

The spiritual deception that will make a one-world religion possible is going on right now in the world. There is a trajectory. And some of you might gasp at this. You might think, '*Okay, what did I walk into?*' I'm going to tell you that the spiritual deception that will make a one-world religion possible is going on right now in what is called Christianity.

Current statistics show that the growth of Christianity in America has plateaued. Here's a quote from the **Pew Report**. "*Those that are growing as a result of religious change are simply gaining new members at a faster rate than they are losing members. Conversely, those that are declining in number because of religious change simply are not attracting enough new members to offset the number of adherents who are leaving those particular faiths.*"

As **Inigo Montoya** put it so well in **Princess Bride** – "*Let me simplify*". There is a lot of sheep shifting going on; but conversions are down. Sheep move from church to church – revolving doors – they just come; they go. They show up on giving lists at one church for a year, two years. And then they just disappear off those lists. And what's going to happen is they're going to show up on somebody else's giving list. They're just shifting. But conversions are down. Rapid growth happens when the next new thing comes into town. And people are saying, "*Did you hear about that think that's happening over there?*" And Christians run there. Conversions are down. Among twenty-somethings the church is in a state of decline.

That's why I love our Monday nights so much because so many are in their twenties. In fact, my friend Tim was just telling me that in his church in East San Diego County, "I'm just used to our demographic of a lot of 40+ people. He said, "*This is really different.*"

Among twenty-somethings the church is in a state of decline.

But that doesn't mean people today are becoming less religious. Religion is on an up-swing.

A man I know told about a conversation he had with a woman on a plane. And she described herself as a 'Cafeteria-Catholic'. What a great nomenclature! She called herself that. And this is her own definition – because he looked at her, and said, "*Define?*" She said, "*I'm a Cafeteria-Catholic because I pick and choose aspects of Catholicism that suit my taste. And whatever I find offensive I just leave off the plate.*"

And, by the way, he wasn't a Catholic, but that was **Thomas Jefferson's** approach to the Bible. Jefferson sat down with his copy of the Bible and simply cut out with scissors (literally) all the parts he didn't believe were right. And he called what remained '**The Philosophy of Jesus Christ**'.

Let me tell you something – Cafeteria-Christianity is the trend in Western Christianity – in what is called Christianity – especially in American church culture. And here's the outcome of that.

I read this quote by **Timothy Keller** –

“Unless you have an authoritative view of the Bible you've got a god you've created; and you are going to be lonely.”

But what's happening is on a collective scale a lot of people in churches are saying, *“I just don't take this book as authoritative. I don't look at this book as the authoritative, the inspired, the infallible, the inerrant Word of God, that speaks to me authoritatively in matters of faith and practice.”* On the collective scale the ultimate outcome of Cafeteria-Christianity will be this thing that the Holy Spirit calls – **“the great prostitute”**.

People are rejecting the so-called restraints of Orthodox Christianity.

And after rejecting the so-called restraints of Orthodox Christianity they are not religion free.

Instead they are concocting their own designer forms of Christianity, their own designer religions.

This is from another **Pew Research** poll in 2007. This will blow your mind. *“57% of people who call themselves 'Evangelical Christians' – that's a pretty direct segment, right? – 'Evangelical'. 57% of people who call themselves 'Evangelical Christians' said they agreed that there are many ways to heaven, not just Christianity.”*

Wow! That's almost 6-in-10 professing Christians now deny the exclusivity of Jesus.

They're in churches.

They're not, not in churches.

And if they're not in churches as they once were –

They're getting together with other Christians; and they're having their churches that take those positions.

That is an incremental precursor, an incremental move towards a unification of all false idolatrous religion that will dominate the world in the first half of the great tribulation. Religious Babylon is going to be the ultimate triumph of tolerance and syncretism – everyone in one happy ecumenical bed of belief.

Now many people like to identify this woman with the Roman Catholic Church. But this is something that's going to include apostate Catholics and Protestants alike, along with a buffet of other false religious systems around the world.

Joseph Seiss has a great commentary on the book of **Revelation** – It's titled **'The Apocalypse'**.

It's an exposition of the book of **Revelation**. In it he says this – *“That Rome and the Romish system are involved, may readily be admitted; but that this is all, and that the sudden fall of Great Babylon is simply the fall of Romanism, or the utter destruction of the city of Rome, must be emphatically denied.”*

So can Rome be involved in this? We're going to see later at the very end of this study that Rome is a location, I believe, where this prostitute religion has its headquarters. It will involve Roman Catholicism as much as it involves Protestantism in its apostasy.

“1 ... Come, I will show you the judgment of the great prostitute who is seated on many waters,”

“2 with whom the kings of the earth have committed sexual immorality,”

In other words –

The kings of the earth get in bed with her.

The kings of the earth bought into the religious system this woman symbolizes.

And this relationship is totally pragmatic; and it's totally symbiotic.

Geo-political powers will get in bed with this religious system to expand and hold political influence.

And this woman that's pictured here will supply the beast with religious sanction.

And in return the symbiotic nature of it is that these governing powers will catapult her to worldly power & prestige.

This religious system will prostitute herself for a ride on the beast.

She gets in bed with these rulers to legitimize and expand her influence.

And we would say – *This will be a marriage made in hell.*

“and with the wine of whose sexual immorality the dwellers on earth have become drunk.”

Religious Babylon intoxicates kings and it intoxicates peoples.

Remember the Karl Marx quote – *“Religion is the opiate of the masses.”*

I think he was partially right because empty religion is the opiate of the masses.

There are people who come and be religious and churchy.

And it's like their drug – just being churchy, being religious – it is their opium.

But not faith in Jesus – Faith in Jesus is no opiate – It's real life.

“³ And he carried me away in the Spirit into a wilderness, and I saw a woman sitting on a scarlet beast that was full of blasphemous names, and it had seven heads and ten horns.”

Now first of all we want to see that – The false religious system is distinct from the beast that it sits upon. They are not one entity. They are distinct. It's not the woman who has the seven heads and ten horns.

One of my friends said, *“No prostitute could stay in business long if she had seven heads and ten horns anyway”*, which I know he wasn't taking that literally.

But it's the beast that has the seven heads and the ten horns.
And she is distinct from this beast.

Don't miss this –

This view is from God's perspective.

God wants us to see the imagery of this woman that represents religious Babylon.

He wants us to see this religious system for what she is. God says this is how he sees her.

She is riding the same beast with seven heads and ten horns that was previously seen in **Revelation 13:1**.

So you want to write **Revelation 13:1** in the margin of your Bible there.

She's riding the same beast previously seen in **Revelation 13:1** – the antichrist and his dictatorship.

God wants us to see her relationship to the antichrist and his dictatorship, all of which is directed by Satan.

So Satan is given the title beast in the book of **Revelation**.

The antichrist is given the title beast in the book of **Revelation**.

The world government is moved by this beast that's being moved by Satan.

So on the one hand she is supported by the political power of the beast.

On the other hand she is in a dominant role.

And at least outwardly in some way for the first 3 ½ years of the great tribulation she controls and directs the beast.

And, again, this view is from God's perspective.

God sees her working in harmony with the blasphemy of the antichrist.

But to the people of the Earth she looks super spiritual.

She's going to possess the faith that everybody wants.

Everybody is looking at this false religious system that is characterized as this woman, this prostitute.

And they're going to think, *‘Isn't she wonderful! Isn't this system amazing!’*

God says, *“No, you don't see her like I see her. She is in harmony, working with the blasphemy of the antichrist.”*

“⁴ The woman was arrayed in purple and scarlet, and adorned with gold and jewels and pearls, holding in her hand a golden cup full of abominations and the impurities of her sexual immorality.”

So this false religious system is going to be involved with the power and wealth of empires

Remember there is a very symbiotic relationship.

And I think she resembles the seduction in the book of **Proverbs** –

that woman who stands in her doorway and seduces this married man.

She resembles that seductress in that she is seducing the world now.

“⁵ And on her forehead was written a name of mystery:

“Babylon the great, mother of prostitutes and of earth's abominations.””

And, again, Babylon is both a theme and a place in the Bible.

Robert Thomas said –

“So the metropolis that functions as headquarters for the beast's empire has a long reputation for its anti-God stance. It is a city. But it is also a vast religious system that stands for everything God does not tolerate.”

It is a theme and a place.

This false religious system that is being judged has given birth to every false religious system on the earth.

The Bible is so cohesive.

When I am think of Babylon as a place and a theme, and Babylon as the mother of all false religious systems, I think back to where God found a man named Abram when he called him –

right in that city,

right in that place,

right in the very birthplace of everything that's been in opposition to God.

And he shows up to Abram, an idol-worshipper, and says, *“Abram, I'm God. Follow me.”*

How desirous is God to save men and women from idolatry?

He calls this man out of the birthplace of idolatry.

Babylon is the fountainhead of all other false religious systems, which in the sight of God is an abomination to him.

God calls Abram out of it, and says,

“I'm going to make a nation out of you.

And out of your descendants is going to come the Messiah, the Saviour of the world.”

Wow – that is our God!

“⁶ And I saw the woman, drunk with the blood of the saints, the blood of the martyrs of Jesus.

When I saw her, I marveled greatly.

So John sees this religious system in action. And he is awestruck because it was a religious system that was devouring true believers throughout the ages. She's not only pictured as the source of all apostate religion, seducing people from the true and living God and the one way to know him; but this false religion is actually engaged in the persecution and killing of true believers.

Here's the creed of this religious harlot – *“Believe in anything but Jesus.”*

Everything is shown tolerance except faith in Christ.

Now as difficult as many passages in the book of **Revelation** may be – and it is not an easy book –

This one is easy to understand in 2014. Jesus is where the world takes offence.

Talk about God, people are going to nod; they'll smile; they may even applaud.

How many times have you seen that in the Grammys Oscars? –

“Oh I just want to thank God.” And everybody is applauding.

And you know that they are in the news all the time for what an anti-God life they're living.

But they're going to say, “I want to thank God.” And everyone applauds – God, yeah, wonderful!

But if you mention Jesus that's not acceptable.

Jesus is and will be the line of demarcation between real Christianity and the bogus belief systems.

And without a doubt everything around us is moving towards the global influence of this –

“mystery: Babylon the great, mother of prostitutes and of earth's abominations.”

Today in 2014 we are being bombarded with the concept of inclusion, inclusive.

Jesus made it very clear that all are invited to know God, all are invited to go to heaven; but the way is very exclusive.

When Jesus made this statement – **“I am the way...”** – that definite article – that’s pretty exclusive. He’s saying, “I am the one and only way.”

“I am the one and only truth.”

“I am the one and only life.”

“And no one – that is pretty big – no one comes to the Father but by me.”

Biblical Christianity is exclusive in the sense of the way to be saved.

The arms of Jesus were stretched out on the cross.

His arms are open to sinners to come to the cross.

He will embrace anyone.

In fact, he said, **“If anyone comes to me, I will in no way cast them aside.”**

The Bible says,

“But to all who did receive him” – that’s getting exclusive now –

“But to all who did receive him, who believed in His name, He gave the right to become children of God.”

“Whoever believes in him is not condemned. But whoever does not believe is condemned already;

Because they have not believed in the name of the only Son of God.”

There is an exclusivity in that.

“⁷ But the angel said to me, “Why do you marvel?””

“John, I see you’re confused. Let me clear things up for you.”

“I will tell you the mystery of the woman, and of the beast with seven heads and ten horns that carries her.”

So this is the angel’s explanation.

“⁸ The beast that you saw was, and is not, and is about to rise from the bottomless pit and go to destruction. And the dwellers on earth whose names have not been written in the book of life from the foundation of the world will marvel to see the beast, because it was and is not and is to come. ⁹ This calls for a mind with wisdom: the seven heads are seven mountains on which the woman is seated; ¹⁰ they are also seven kings, five of whom have fallen, one is, the other has not yet come, and when he does come he must remain only a little while. ¹¹ As for the beast that was and is not, it is an eighth but it belongs to the seven, and it goes to destruction. ¹² And the ten horns that you saw are ten kings who have not yet received royal power, but they are to receive authority as kings for one hour, together with the beast. ¹³ These are of one mind, and they hand over their power and authority to the beast.”

Boy, am I glad the angel cleared that up!

I looked at many views over a period of hours working through this.

We’ve already talked about this in some length earlier on – the beast, because it was and is not and is to come –

We talked about the counterfeit resurrection in regards to the antichrist, and how the whole world marvelled at him because of that.

But for the rest of this, this is where I want to go, and here’s where I want to land.

Here’s the big picture – The second coming of Jesus – And there will be one.

If anybody wants to say Jesus is not coming a second time you have problems because Jesus said he is;

You have problems because when Jesus ascended to heaven in the book of **Acts** there were angels that stood there.

And the disciples are looking up. And the angels ask them, *“Why are you looking up? This same Jesus is going to return just the same way you’re seeing him leave. And he’s coming again.”*

In the Old Testament it’s prophesied that he’s going to come; he’s going to return; he’s going to set his feet on the Mount of Olives. And it’s going to split in two. Jesus is coming again.

The second coming of Jesus will be preceded by a great spiritual seduction.

And Jesus emphasized this time and again in **Matthew 24 & 25**.

They asked him, *“What is it going to look like before your return?”*

And he said, *“There are going to be false Messiahs. There are going to be false Christs.*

There are going to be false prophets, spiritual deception, spiritual seduction.”

“¹⁵ And the angel said to me, “The waters that you saw, where the prostitute is seated, are peoples and multitudes and nations and languages. ¹⁶ And the ten horns that you saw, they and the beast will hate the prostitute. They will make her desolate and naked, and devour her flesh and burn her up with fire,”

Put verse **16** next to irony in the dictionary. The beast and his buddies will turn on the harlot.

“naked”, “eaten”, “burned” – That is the end of spiritual seduction and compromise.

And this moment unveils the true nature of the beast.

Would you write **2 Thessalonians 2:3, 4** in the margin of your Bible there?

“³ the man of lawlessness is revealed, the son of destruction, ⁴ who opposes & exalts himself against every so-called god or object of worship, so that he takes his seat in the temple of God, proclaiming himself to be God.”

Remember the antichrist is actually the means by which Satan himself receives worship, which has been Satan’s single desire since the day he declared that he would be like the Most High. At this point in that seven-year period of time the harlot is no longer needed. From now on the only religion allowed is the worship of the beast. Now we can look through history; and that’s been the MO of tyrants and politicians. They use religion for their purposes, and then discard religion when it’s no longer needed. Well, the harlot, this prostitute is no longer needed. From now on the only religion allowed is the worship of the beast. And to secure that worship he blackmails the world. Everyone must bow down and worship his image and take the mark of the beast and the number of his name.

“¹⁷ for God has put it into their hearts to carry out his purpose by being of one mind and handing over their royal power to the beast, until the words of God are fulfilled.”

Babylon – naked, eaten, burned. God has directed the judgment against religious Babylon.

And he used a wicked group to be an instrument of his judgment against the wickedness of religious Babylon.

God also ordained the political support that these ten kings give to the antichrist.

In all of that God is giving the world exactly what the world wants just prior to the return of Jesus –

Godless religion and Godless rulers.

“¹⁸ And the woman that you saw is the great city that has dominion over the kings of the earth.”

So here religious Babylon is identified with Rome. In John’s day there was no doubt which city reigns over the kings of the earth. Rome was the political, the economic, the religious center of the world at the close of the 1st century. Across history & culture this religious Babylon has always been identified with great cities that reign over the kings of the earth. But, again, please remember the association of this prostitute, this harlot, this Babylon religion with Rome doesn’t mean that the Roman Catholic church is identical to religious Babylon.

And here’s how we’re going to close.

Chapter **17** has spotlighted religious Babylon.

Chapter **18** focuses on commercial Babylon.

And remember Babylon isn’t just a city.

It’s a system – It’s a trap that the god of this world uses to deceive and manipulate.

And he entices the world through religion.

And he entices the world through riches.

And Babylon is about both.

Chapter **17** is dedicated to the religious aspect of Babylon.

Chapter **18** is dedicated to the economic aspect of Babylon.

But here's the big takeaway – This is what's been on my heart –

The second coming of Jesus will be preceded by a great seduction. The great seduction is the culmination of the spiritual seduction that was birthed back in **Genesis 11**. The designer, the architect of this age-old seduction is the author of the lie of lies – the old serpent in **Genesis 3** who lied and said that man could have life without God. But as we look at this seduction that's been going on for ages seduction is not one act. It's a succession of acts, whereby defences are dropped until you finally give in. The spiritual seduction that will culminate in a one-world religious system will involve incremental series of compromises on the heart of the gospel until finally that which is called Christian will have been seduced into a form of godliness that denies the saving power of the blood of Jesus.

Some time ago I was reading an article on the internet about a particular mega-church in Connecticut. So I copied the article; and I pasted it into a Word document. The Word document without doing any changes to it was eight pages long, single-spaced. It was a pretty long article. In those eight pages there was not one time that the name of Jesus was mentioned. The article talked a lot about how the pastor "*gives it straight from the Bible*" about how to live life. But there was not one mention of the name of Jesus. That is the trajectory of seduction. There was lots of talk about love, even God's love, lots of talk about compassion and good deeds, lots of talk about joining the kingdom of God, lots of talk about a new reformation. But I want you to think about it – The first reformation was about creeds. The new reformation that's going on amongst these people who are moving incrementally away from Biblical Christianity – it's not about creeds; it's about deeds. And we should never have creed without deed. We should never have belief without works. Faith and works should go together. Works follow Biblical faith. But works without Biblical faith isn't going to save anybody. The seduction will involve the incremental compromise of the very heart of the Gospel.

Now would you write these Scripture references in the margin of your Bible?

Ephesians 1: “⁷In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of his grace,”

Ephesians 2: “¹³But now in Christ Jesus you who were at one time far off are made near by the blood of Christ.”

redemption – blood – far – near – by the blood

2 Corinthians 5:19-21 – “God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them; and has committed to us the word of reconciliation. ²⁰Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did you by us: We pray in Christ's behalf, be reconciled to God. ²¹For he has made him (Jesus) to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.”

Colossians 1:20-22 – “²⁰And, having made peace through the blood of his cross, by him to reconcile all things unto himself; ... ²¹And you, that were sometime alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now he has reconciled ²²in the body of his flesh through death, to present you holy and unblameable and unreprouvable in his sight:”

Now in light of those verses – this is from an article –

It leads with a question – **“Was Jesus's primary role as the Son of God to atone the world?”**

Here's the content – *“This theology of atonement is primarily based on 2 Corinthians 5; “¹⁹For God indeed was in Christ reconciling the world to himself.” Colossians 1:20 claims that the peace of that reconciliation was accomplished by the death of Jesus the Redeemer, making peace through the blood of his cross. Thus this redemption is accomplished, not so much by the death of Christ, but by the shedding of his blood.”*

Now check this out – *“This understanding of Jesus's mission on Earth does not sit well with me.”*

Now let me ask you a simple question –
What other understanding is there for those passages?
There is none. It's just so simple and clear.

“This understanding of Jesus’s mission on Earth does not sit well with me.”

Well, you have a problem.
What you’ve just said is you reject the authority of the Bible.

Here’s what he says – *“I would like to believe”* – there it is – rejecting the authority of the Bible.
The Bible says one thing. But he’s saying – *“I would like to believe that Jesus’s primary mission on earth was to “reveal” the full identity of his father and show us “a new way of life.”*”

Question #2 – What does it mean to be saved?

“David Hopkins, editor of Next Wave, suggests that the church ought to stop trying to save people. Or at least he argues that the sort of personal salvation on offer in the church today simply doesn’t work in a post-modern climate. It doesn’t make sense to people. What people are looking for is to have a sense of wonder restored. You can read what he has to say here. This has got to be worth thinking about. We have assumed for a long time that Christianity is a religion of salvation. You start off being lost. You welcome Jesus into your heart. You get saved. And you go to heaven rather than to hell. Then he asks – If that simple narrative is defunct what do we replace it with?”

So they’re saying that the narrative of God’s story is now defunct.
And they’re asking what do we replace it with?
Well, the woman in **Revelation 17** has some suggestions.

Here are some differing views on the way to interpret the book of Revelation –

If we concede the preterist view –
that this was only pertinent & relevant to 1st century Christians living in Rome specifically,
that all of this is symbolic; it’s code that was relevant to them and nobody else –
Let’s just concede that.

Is there any historical event in the Bible that’s past tense and that is not relevant to our Christianity today?
The answer to that question is no. Everything in the Bible is relevant and pertinent for us today.
The Word of God is alive. It’s powerful. It’s relevant. All of it is relevant for us today.

So even if you choose to say, *“I’m not buying into this”* –
That’s why I didn’t go into all the detail and views of this.
That’s why I said, *“I’m glad the angel cleared all that up for us.”*
Because there was a gazillion views on that.
We don’t have to get lost there.
We don’t have to get into disagreements there.
Although you can discuss them. You can talk about them.

But the truth of the matter is that there is admonition after admonition after admonition that something has been going on that is warring against the worship of the true and living God on planet Earth since **Genesis 3**. And there is constantly this ongoing seduction to draw people away from the one, true and living God, who has revealed himself to us in His Word. He is the God who speaks. He is the God who has revealed himself to us. And he has revealed himself to us in an amazing way in the person of Jesus Christ.

“And we beheld his glory, the glory of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth.”
“In the beginning was the Word; the Word was with God; and the Word was God.
“And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us.”

No one has ever seen God. But the only begotten of the Father has revealed & brought him out into the open for us. But Jesus didn't reveal the Father to us so that we would find a new way to live. He revealed the Father to us so that we might know how to be saved. And Jesus said, *"I am the one and only way, the one and only truth, the one and only life."*

The narrative is not defunct. But men and women are in the trajectory that the world is on towards a culmination of people abandoning faith to buy into a collective ecumenical whatever so that they're all just happy with the god of their own invention. Time and again Paul warns; Paul exhorts.

I can't remember when it was, but I mentioned the interview with the Hillsong pastor in New York City, and some of the stuff he said that was so profoundly challenging – and not in a good way challenging - like, *"Really? You really said that?"* And after the study that I mentioned that one of the brothers came up, and said, *"Did you see the interview on TV?"* And I said, *"No, I just read some of the excerpts from it in this article."* And he said, *"Well, in that interview his wife says, 'We don't put ourselves in a position to speak into people's lives. Their journey is their journey.'"*

And I just stopped & thought, 'How much of the epistles Paul is being intrusive into every Christian's life? He's saying, "Your journey has to be informed and defined and directed by God.

Let me inform you about your journey.

Let me warn you about your journey.

Let me encourage you about your journey.

And, by the way, while you're on your journey, don't do that.

And while you're on this journey, do this."

Of course there is truth. But there is this incremental hammering.

For some of it, you might say, *"I'm not going to abandon my faith for political expediency. What am I going to get?"*

But there is political currency in relationships. People will begin to give up theological truth, for acceptance.

"Well, none of my contemporaries are believing like that. And they're kind of taking the position that – Maybe there really isn't a hell.

And maybe God is bigger than anything we could imagine.

Maybe in the end love really wins (Rob Bell)."

The press to compromise the truth is not getting less.

Jesus said it would get greater before he returned.

And for those of you who have never met Jesus I'm so glad you're here with us because we're just being black and white – there is a real Jesus; and he really did shed his blood so that we can be saved; because there really is a God who really loves us; and he loves us so much that he couldn't bear for anyone to perish, for anyone to pay the wages that they've earned by their own sin. I earned death by my sin. The wages of sin is death. I earned eternal separation from God by my sin. And God says, "I'm not willing that you perish. But I am just. And the wages of sin has to be satisfied. But I so love you I will be just and have my Son stand in your place. And I'll take your sin and put it upon my Son. He will redeem you from the penalty and power of sin that you committed. And in perfect justice I can receive you as my child if you will trust Jesus to be your Saviour. That is the glorious good news. So if you don't know Jesus you can know Jesus.

And you might be saying, *"What did I walk into?"* That's exactly how I felt the night I got saved; because I went to go hang out with a guy who I heard had become a Christian; and all I wanted to do was laugh at him all night long for making such a stupid mistake, until he opened his mouth and said the name of Jesus like he knew him. And for the next three hours all I wanted to do was hear him tell me about Jesus. And by about 1:30-2:00 am in the morning all I could do was say, *"Whatever this is, I need to have this Jesus. I don't even know what that means. But you have life. I don't have life."* And what I found was on that dark hour of the morning on that December 31st God saved me and made me a brand new person. And I was clueless as to what that was going to be. And everything in my head, everything in my heart said, *'Are you being stupid? Are you going to throw your life away for this guy's Jesus? Because what is this going to end up in?'*

Well, if you don't know Jesus, I want to tell you, it ends up in a real living relationship with the real true and living God, and life that Jesus said is abundant, and that doesn't even come close in human language to describe the life that he imparts to you. I couldn't have dreamed my life up.

And that doesn't mean it's a life that is now free of every problem that could ever be imagined. Yesterday I was snot-crying over the near departure of a very dear friend of ours. A dear friend of Metro is going to be leaving us. That guts me. Jesus didn't promise that we would never have losses in life. But the reality is that we have life in him. "*You are enough for me.*"

If you came in not knowing Jesus, and you leave not knowing Jesus, I guarantee you there is never enough in this world – never. Because this world can never take the place of Jesus. But you give your life to Jesus, you get the forgiveness of sin. And for the rest of your life this world is as close to hell as you'll ever get. And then you get heaven forever with Jesus.