

08.23.20

Revelation

Chapter 11 - Revealing Religion's Hatred for the Light Distinguishing Worship from Ritual (vs. 1-2)

Revelation 11:1-2: Then there was given me a measuring rod like a staff; and someone said, "Get up and measure the temple of God and the altar, and those who worship in it. Leave out the court which is outside the temple and do not measure it, for it has been given to the nations; and they will tread under foot the holy city for forty-two months.

Well, this whole Chapter 11 is a unit by itself, and in a way what we're just going to be doing today is introducing this chapter to you in the context of the rest of the book, which the whole purpose of the book is to reveal to us things that have been hidden. In many respects, the mystery of God. Not only the mystery of His administration, as Ephesians 1 would emphasize, not only

the mystery of His grace, but clearly the mystery of the things that are happening and why they happen, the forces behind the things in this world. And what really is moving and shaking in this world, the things that we have a relationship with every day. Because the things that we do and the places that we go and the things that we involve ourselves in really have forces that are behind them. The question is, are you courting those forces or are you keeping in align with that which is truth? So, at the very beginning of the book, one of the things that He wants to establish is light, truth. What is the truth? And that's always pictured as light because light by its very nature reveals what's there. Obscurity, in contrast, covers. So, you can't see what is there. And it's why Jesus calls Himself, "I am the way, the truth, and the life." When He uses the word "truth," it starts off at the beginning of the Gospel of John, the "Light of the world". And the Light shown in the darkness, the darkness could not comprehend or overpower the Light. So, the wonderful thing about truth is when it comes to the room, it begins to expose the obscurity and expose the shadows. It takes things out of shadows, and you go, "Oh,

that's what that really is about." So that when he begins in the first chapter of Revelation, he describes the fact that you and I as a church, the church of God has a role. The seven churches of God are the seven candlesticks, and the role is what? To bear the light; to proclaim the light. Of course, we oftentimes sing that chorus, "*the Light of the world is Jesus,*" and we're to proclaim the message of the glorious gospel of Christ. That's what the church is to do. We're not trying to fix the world. We're trying to shine the light. And it is our job to let our light so shine before men that they might see our good works and glorify God in heaven, that they might see the truth. Now, what we also understand is the truth is oftentimes perceived as something that men shun. As John 3 says, they love darkness rather than light because their deeds are evil. But the purpose of the light is to display the glory of Christ to the world. When he begins to then talk about the seven churches, he begins to reveal all those things in those seven churches that are much like the very things that churches down through the ages have battled as well as today. And that is in some cases legalism, some cases it's fear, some cases it's tolerance and allowing the world

to come into our lives and buying this whole thing or causing this whole thing to be more a thing of capitalism rather than a thing of grace and love, and before long, you're running a business rather than a place of worship. So, there are so many things that come into play. And He begins to talk to the church, and He says, "Look, you're not being lights." In fact, one of the statements that He makes to the church at Ephesus is, "You keep doing this, and I'm taking the lamp away. You'll cease to be a light for Me." So, the purpose of the church is to proclaim that light. And as He goes through, if you were to go through chapters 2 and 3, you'll see repeated over and over again the end result what God wants each church to do, and that is to overcome.

Now, the question is, what does He want them to overcome? And by the way, it's repeated at least seven times, because there are seven churches in Asia Minor. So, He wants the church in Ephesus to overcome, Revelation 2:7, right? He wants the church of Smyrna to overcome their fear. So, as He begins to list, Revelation 2:7, Revelation 2:11, Revelation 2:17, Revelation 2:26,

Revelation 3:5, Revelation 3:12, Revelation 3:21, in every case He says, "Overcome." What He wants them to overcome is the darkness that is creeping into the church. Because the darkness, as Paul will say to the church at Corinth, the god of this world has blinded the hearts or the minds of those that are not believing. So, the world is blinding us, it's keeping man from seeing the glory of God. If the church begins to act like the world, then the truth begins to get obscured. And so, in every case He's showing, you don't want to let the world get in. It's one of the reasons why the church has to be extremely different than the world. Because once you start looking like the world, you start obscuring the message. Because there's nothing like the message of Christ in the world's philosophies. There's nothing like it. I mean, you actually get better by surrendering? That's how you win? The least is the greatest? I mean, there's nothing about our message that even looks like the world. So that Jesus will even turn to His disciples, and He says, "You know, everybody in the world, they're looking for position. This is why your mom brought you two boys, and you want the right and the left side. But we don't run things that

way in heaven. The greatest in heaven is going to be the least, the servant of them all. I came to seek and to save that which is lost. I came to serve you.” And that's what makes greatness in heaven. So, the whole thing is literally upside down, and we need to proclaim that difference. So, He writes to them, and He calls the church out.

As He does that, then in Chapter 4, He turns and He says, “Now, I just want to let you know...” It's like He takes the camera off of the church on the earth and He says, “I just want to let you know what it looks like in the heavens and the powers that are there.” And so, in many respects, He shows the glory and the majesties and the forces of great power in heaven. The reason why He does this is He wants the church to know, we've got our sources. Don't worry. We can handle it. The church is going, “Well, what do I do? What do I do today?” Don't worry. We got our heavies here. But then what He does in the very next chapter is He says, “But you as a church need not to proclaim our heavies, but you need to proclaim the Lamb. Because in heaven, the greatest power is the Lamb.”

Now, once again, that's just baffling to the world. But That's what he reveals in Chapter 5.

So, by the time he comes to Chapter 6, he then begins to take us on a journey and he says, “Okay, this is the way the world has seen it, and these are the things the world has gone after.” And you go through the apocalyptic horses, you almost go through history, and you begin to see the things that we've chased after as a world and how the world is so distorted in their way of thinking. After he finishes giving that display, he then begins to reveal that there are forces in the heavens, and this is how they see things. Now, when he's talking about the heavens, he's talking about angelic beings. And so, he begins to show their influence on the things of the world, as well as the distortion that they begin to deal with. So, that scene.

Now, he takes us to this interesting picture of this picture of this little book and this great messenger that is on all the earth. And this little book is opened, and we begin to see two different reactions to the book. One is a sweet taste but yet a bitter response. So, when we come to, as we did last week, Chapter 10, what he's revealing to us is

there are two ways to view the message of God. One is, of course, that as we sometimes sing the song that it's a sweet message and the sweet word of God, and understanding His grace upon us is like honey to our lips. But the other is the reaction in which man rejects the glorious gospel of Jesus Christ. Any message of God, when God begins to proclaim righteousness, man looks at His judgment. When God begins to proclaim grace, man looks at it as weakness. So, whatever God proclaims, man sees it in a distorted perspective. And that's one of the great purposes of Chapter 10, to reveal, it's the same message, and all the world's got it. And you know, people are scratching their heads, they're going, "Well, I don't know why all the world's not saved." I don't either. Because it's the same message. But they don't see the glory of the face of Christ as in the angels shining like the sun. They don't see the great hope and the great peace that God is giving as the rainbow over His head. They don't see that. The only thing they see is the judgment of God and they see the legs and the fire and the hostility of God. "God is just mean. God is just mean." How can you say God is mean? Do you not see the messenger? "Oh yeah, we see

him. We see those burning feet.” Okay, the burning feet is all you see because of your perspective from the earth. You're not really seeing God. So, that's the purpose of Chapter 10, is to demonstrate the fact that you and I see things very differently by virtue of our position and what we embrace. These are literally the people on the earth, and they're embracing these things.

By the time we now come to Chapter 11, he puts us into the realm of this message, God's message, and not just simply the gospel, but at the prophecy of God, the proclaiming of God to the world, of His righteousness, of His goodness. Well, the whole message of the gospel of God is all of that, right? So, these two messengers are going to be sent to the earth. The question is, how is the earth going to receive messengers of God? You would think, “Wonderful.” I mean, what if, in fact, the messenger of God was shown with glory and power? All those that worship power and glory would embrace them, right? See, what's going to show is the heart of man. And in every case, everything's being revealed. So, God is revealing the heart of man and his response to the things

of God. Now, what's interesting specifically about Chapter 11 is that it starts off with the measuring of the temple. It's very interesting. And it's going to emphasize the temple. It's not only going to emphasize the temple, but it's going to emphasize the city and the city in which the temple is in, which is Jerusalem. Strange and bizarre even beyond that is that he'll define Jerusalem as Sodom and Egypt in the text. So, why is he doing it? And why are we at this moment jettisoned into Jerusalem after he just got finished telling us there are two ways to receive the message? Then He sends the two messengers. So, there's the connection. So, the question now that we have to pose is, what is He trying to convey to us in this particular scenario where literally these two prophets are going to come? And in many respects, I mean, it's much like Zechariah. If you were to read the beginning of Zechariah, and he talks about these are the olive tree, and it's a picture of, "Why are they hooked to the olive tree?" Because it's like having a force of the Spirit moving through them that's never ending, bringing the oil through them. So, the Spirit is ever moving, and they're ever lights, because, of course, they would use the olive

oil for the lamps or the lights. So, they're ever burning brightly. They never cease to burn brightly. There's ever a resource and a source. Of course, you and I have been given the Holy Spirit of God, which is anointed by God, by the oil of God, and we become a light or the light of the world through that.

So, you have these two that are placed on the earth for the purpose of, once again, not unlike the church, if you go back to Revelation 1, what is the church called? The lampstands. What are these called? The lampstands. So, we know exactly what they're doing. They're proclaiming the message. The question is, how is the world going to respond to this? Now, what makes this extremely interesting is it is in the setting of Jerusalem, it is in the setting of where the temple is. And though many of the pastors or preachers or people who go through this particular text will focus on the building of the temple, which we're not going to really necessarily get into, the temple's got to be built, and so that's a moot point to me. But the issue of the text is that this is a very, very, very religious city. That's the whole purpose of the text. It's

drawing us in. How will the world react to the message of God? Well, let's go to the most religious place on the planet. Let's go to Jerusalem. And let's go to the place where the Islam faith, the Christian faith, the Jewish faith all declare, "This is our city." Let's go there. And when you think of the Christian faith being there, you think of all kinds of factions and factions that come out of the Christian faith, as well as Judaism, as well as Islam. Even at the very beginning of Islam, when they were making Mecca one of the great places, they would literally build their buildings to face Jerusalem. So, it's understood that this is the most religious place to be. God's going to make a distinction in this particular text between religion and those that are His. And He does this with a measuring rod. That makes sense, doesn't it? We oftentimes talk about the canonization of Scripture. And "canon" actually is a word that means "reed" or a measuring stick. Basically, the same word that's in the text. What that means is you set up a standard, and if it meets the standard, then it's Scripture. If it doesn't meet the standard, it's not. So, that's the canonization of Scripture. But what this is basically doing is it's a canonization of Christians, or of

those that are God's. The Lord knows those who are His, right? And He's going to be revealing them.

In many respects, you kind of see that picture in Matthew 25 where it says that He's going to separate the sheep from the goats. Remember that particular parable? And so, He talks about it in verse 32 of that.

A parallel text of that is in Ezekiel 20. And as you go on in that particular chapter, he uses this picture of the sheep going under the rod. And the rod is that which designates whether they are His sheep or not. So, in many respects, you're dealing with a measuring rod that is a standard that is really conveying, "My sheep, not my sheep, or My sheep," or goats, whatever. But the fact is that He's making distinction.

So, as we pick up in Chapter 11, it is a distinction that is going to be revealed even through the reception of the messengers. And that's going to be played out for us within the text. We won't get that far.

But if you look at the very beginning of it, in Revelation 11:1, it says,

(Revelation 11:1) “Then there was given me...”

That is John. Now, this is once again after he had ingested the message, which was at first sweet to his lips, which is a sweet message of God, but bitter to his stomach, which was the reaction of the world towards him. And we're going to see that being played out within the passage.

He starts off,

“Then there was given me a measuring rod like a staff...”

Which once again is the same basic word that can be used as “scepter,” like in Hebrews 1:8, talks about and uses the word “scepter”; the same thing as a staff in Matthew with a shepherd with a sheep. So, in both cases, it has a connotation of ruling and deciding and judging and keeping and protecting all in one. So, there you have the word.

“Then there was given me a measuring rod like a staff; and someone said, “Get up and measure the temple of God and the altar, and those who worship in it.”

Now, that phrase is setting the whole stage for everything. What he's stating is that God's focus is on the

temple, which when he talks about temple, he's talking about the temple proper, specifically the holy and the Holy of Holies. The temple proper. He's not talking about the outer courts, which we're going to talk about in just a moment. What he's talking about is the temple proper. And there's a reason why he's making emphasis on that. Then he doesn't stop with just the temple. He literally takes us into the holy place in which he wants to get us ultimately to that altar place. See the passage? So, he interjects altar. Now, the reason why he interjects altar, if you can define it properly this way, it is the place of sacrifice. That's literally what the altar means, place of sacrifice. So, he's bringing us in, and his statement is that this is where we worship, at the place of sacrifice. This is where God is truly worshiped, the place of sacrifice. So, what he's going to do is he's going to make a distinction between those who truly worship, as Paul will write to Timothy, he goes, "I tell you, all those who desire to live godly will suffer." Not might, will suffer, right?

In fact, if you keep your finger here, and look with me in Romans 8, it says,

(Romans 8:14) “For all who are being led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God.

(Romans 8:15) For you have not received a spirit of slavery leading to fear again, but you have received a spirit of adoption as sons by which we cry out, “Abba! Father!”

(Romans 8:16) The Spirit Himself testifies with our spirit that we are children of God,

(Romans 8:17) and if children, heirs also, heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ...”

Do you see that word “if” in there, in verse 17? Did you mark that one?

“... if indeed we suffer with Him so that we may also be glorified with Him.”

“If indeed we suffer.” Where do we meet God? At the cross. That's where we meet Him. At the place of sacrifices. Every single time, that's where we meet God. So that, for instance, if you look with me in Matthew 5, pick up with me in verse 10,

(Matthew 5:10) “Blessed are those who have been persecuted for the sake of righteousness, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.”

That's where we meet God. That's where we meet Him.

(Matthew 5:11) “Blessed are you when people insult you and persecute you, and falsely say all kinds of evil against you because of Me.”

(Matthew 5:12) Rejoice and be glad...”

You've just met God. That's where we meet Him.

So, as you come to Revelation 11, He wants to measure this out, and if you look at the end of verse 1,

“... and those who worship in it.”

Not just the temple, but in the place of sacrifice. Both of those are taken into consideration in the text.

Now, he says in verse 2,

(Revelation 11:2) “Leave out...”

Now, the best way actually to translate that would be “cast out”. “Get them out.” So, the next phrase is, “Get these out,” the people that are in the court. Now, he's

making a distinction. Once again, just to kind of add a little history to this, we know that by the time that this is written, it's been about 20 years since the temple has been completely destroyed. So, John is writing this, and the temple was destroyed around 70 AD. And we're somewhere close to 90 or more that John is writing this. And he's writing about something that they remember, but not something that they could go look at. But what the mental picture is, of course, in their minds is the great temple of Herod that he built in the glorious city of Jerusalem. And from what we understand, I think his original intent was actually to make it about 5 football fields long and literally about 3 football fields wide. It ended up being about 2, maybe 2 1/2 football fields long and about a football field wide. Huge. In that regard, to help you understand the massive undertaking of this, of course, John 2 tells us that for 46 years they've been building it. So, it's been under construction for 46 years. So, Scripture tells us that. So, we know there's been a lot of effort put in. We also know that if you were to take Solomon's temple and put it next to it, Solomon's temple would have been a fraction of the size of the great temple

that Herod built. Now, the reason why Herod built the temple so humongous was not because he loved God. He hated the Jews and of course he wanted to kill Jesus. So, that's pretty clear what he wanted to do. But the reason why he wanted to build this temple was not only to make a name for himself, but it was a time in which great men were competing by virtue of the great edifices that they built. And so, he was competing and was going to make this temple far grander than any other temple. You have walls that are 9 to 10 stories high. They're 16 feet thick. You have doors that, well, the Nicanor door is 75 feet high and 60 feet wide. I don't know how hard or easy it is to open your door, but... And then many of these doors are covered not only with silver, but with gold and with bronze. So, you can imagine seeing the glory of these wonderful, majestic things and feeling so small next to the glory of them. 162 colonnades as you walk down Solomon's portico. Now, these are the outer courts. And it's in the outer courts, interestingly enough, that the wealthy and the rich would live in. And oftentimes, the king would even have a palace next to the great place of worship, but on the outer side of it. So, the outer was

always understood not only to be the place in which Gentiles could come in, but it was also the place in which the wealthy owned tremendous places in which they glorified themselves. So that when money was given and things were embellished, it would be oftentimes their very houses and palaces within this great institutional place of worship. It was Herod that was looking to really aggrandize himself. So, that's the picture.

If you look within the text in verse 2,

“Leave out the court...”

Now, when you read about the court, and we won't take out time to go into the detail of this, but when you read about the court, especially as you get towards the end of Matthew, it talks about the high priest. And of course, they go into the court when they're bringing Jesus in. And this is the place where they're holding the judgment against Christ in the court of Caiaphas. Actually, the text says. It'll be in this realm that Peter will deny Christ in the court. And you can understand because it's not only ominous, but it is intimidating by virtue of just its grandiosity alone. And so, here this place is, and God says,

“I'm not taking the place that is perceived as the most glorious.” You would think that the Holy of Holies would be perceived as the most glorious, but the Holy of Holies, and this is one of Herod's upsets, one of the things that bothered him the most, is that pretty much the Holy of Holies had to be built by a certain dimension. But nothing was said about the courts. And so, that's why he made all the other stuff really big and grand and glorious and everything else. Because we know, according to original specs, of course, God's desire was just a tabernacle and tent. And He says, “The whole purpose of this is to let you know that I'm going to come in a fleshly body, and I'm going to dwell among you.” That was the whole purpose of it. But of course, man has a way of taking it way beyond what it's meant to do. And it's a perfect picture of religion. This is the point of the whole text, that man takes that which God has ordained to bring him closer to Himself. And instead of drawing closer to God, he aggrandizes himself. It's just the way that man does. So, the passage says,

“Leave out the court which is outside the temple...”

He's letting you know they're outside. They're not in. Now, what makes this extremely special is, of course, we're in a very religious city. I think right now, according to the census of little Jerusalem area, just the little Jerusalem proper, if you were to take that particular area, from what I understand, there are 900,000 people living there today. They say that in this city, out of that 900,000, only 9,000 will say that they're not affiliated with some kind of faith, which makes it literally still the most religious city in the world, because you go to most cities and you're not going to have that kind of equation. But as they begin to figure out, they understand this is a very religious place. So, what we're seeing is not only a religious city, but we're seeing a religious place in the temple. And yet God is saying, "Go closer. It's fewer. It's fewer. It's fewer than that." And He moves in, and He says, "Now, you know the temple? Leave the court out." So, the passage reads this way,

"Leave out the court which is outside the temple and do not measure it, for it has been given to the nations..."

“Ethnos,” more specifically, in this particular context, he's making reference to the pagans, those that are not believers.

“... and they will tread...”

And the point of treading is that they will see this as something to devastate and to desecrate. And it really is the desecration of this, that is revealing that they have no regard for what is holy.

But the point is,

“... they will tread under foot the holy city for forty-two months.”

Now, we're going to get into the detail of the 42 months. Of course, it's going to be mentioned in the next verse, 1,260 days. But without getting too much into the time mode at this juncture, what you need to see is God making the distinction. And it is at that point that you begin to realize that there are certain things about that outer court that is telling us something about religion. And here's the thing. The porticos of Solomon, which was part of the outward part of it, is where the rabbis and the

teachers would all gather together in these great colonnades that would go up 9, 10 stories high, made completely out of marble, shipped in from Corinth. These massive beams that you're walking around, and of course, you're obviously feeling pretty important. I mean, this is one of the reasons why they try to make grand universities look grand, because it makes you feel like, "Okay, I'm pretty important." So, you're walking around these things, and you're being led by the different rabbis and the different teachers. Well, what it's talking about is that this is a place of education, it's a place of academics, it's a place of knowledge, it's a place of wisdom, it's a place of discussion, it's a place of debate, it's a place of theory, it's a place of science. All these things are going on around these things, and God says, "Leave them out." I mean, if you can begin to grasp what God is talking about here within the passage. And not only is He talking about that, but He's talking about the impressive works of man's hands, which have gone beyond what God has ordained to be that place in which God is going to meet you, man has gone and built his great edifice unto himself. And so, you see that this outward place is a place of works of

man's hand. It's a place of wealth. It's a place of overt altruism because people are coming in and they're throwing money out there and they say, "Oh wow, look at how much money they gave to the poor people." But it was done in such a way that you would have to put it in the chest, and people were watching you do this.

If you look with me in Luke 21, you see the picture. Don't you see the picture? I see the picture.

(Luke 21:1) "And He looked up and saw the rich putting their gifts into the treasury."

Where do you think that was? It's in the outer court.

(Luke 21:2) "And He saw a poor widow putting in two small copper coins."

(Luke 21:3) And He said, "Truly I say to you, this poor widow put in more than all of them;

(Luke 21:4) for they all out of their surplus put into the offering; but she out of her poverty put in all that she had to live on."

(Luke 21:5) And while some were talking about the temple..."

Well, how could you sit there and not talk about the temple? Who should you be talking about? Connie and I had gone to Washington, D.C. a while back, and we went to one of the great churches that were built there. And I mean, it's just massive looking. Very intimidating. I was listening to people talk, and I didn't hear one talk about God. Not one. “Oh, it was majestic, all right. And the paintings and the stained glass were just out of this world.”

“And while some were talking about the temple, that it was adorned with beautiful stones and votive gifts...”

You know, actually the walkway within the temple was all mosaic, and every one of them were different precious stones on the walkway? You were walking on precious stones.

“... He said,

(Luke 21:6) “As for these things which you are looking at, the days will come in which there will not be left one stone upon another which will not be torn down.”

(Luke 21:7) They questioned Him, saying, “Teacher, when therefore will these things happen? And what will be the sign when these things are about to take place?”

(Luke 21:8) And He said, “See to it that you are not misled; for many will come in My name, saying, ‘I am He,’ and, ‘The time is near.’ Do not go after them.

(Luke 21:9) When you hear of wars and disturbances, do not be terrified; for these things must take place first, but the end does not follow immediately.”

(Luke 21:10) Then He continued by saying to them, “Nation will rise against nation and kingdom against kingdom,

(Luke 21:11) and there will be great earthquakes...”

Look at verse 12,

(Luke 21:12) “But before all these things, they will lay their hands on you and will persecute you...”

Look at the next verse,

(Luke 21:13) “It will lead to an opportunity for your testimony.”

You know what He's saying? They're saying, "How will we meet You? How will we meet You? How will we meet You?" He goes, "I'll meet you at the altar." "But look at these big stones. Look at this." "No, I'll meet you at the altar. Because they're going to persecute you, and that's where we're going to meet. That's where we're going to get together."

And so, He's going to give them utterance in verse 15, (Luke 21:16) "But you will be betrayed even by parents and brothers and relatives and friends, and they will put some of you to death,

(Luke 21:17) and you will be hated..."

(Luke 21:19) "By your endurance you will gain your lives."

If you look at verse 20, what's going to happen to Jerusalem? It's the very thing that He's going to describe in Revelation.

(Luke 21:20) "But when you see Jerusalem surrounded by armies, then recognize that her desolation is near."

They're going to come in, and they're going to trample underfoot the holy city. That's what's going to happen.

And He actually says in verse 24,

(Luke 21:24) “and they will fall by the edge of the sword, and will be led captive into all the nations; and Jerusalem will be trampled under foot by the Gentiles until the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled.”

“And people will be afraid. But I'll tell you what I'll do. I'll meet you. I'll meet you at the place of sacrifice.”

You see, the problem is that church of Laodicea, one of the churches of God, had become so wealthy that they perceived that their wealth was a sign of righteousness. So, when He finally talks to the church of Laodicea, He says, “Look, you say you're rich, you say you don't have any need of anything, that you can see everything really clearly because of all that you have.” He says, “I tell you, you're naked, you're blind, and you're poor because you don't have the altar. You left out the altar.” That's the problem with religion. Religion just keeps forgetting the altar. I mean, it's a minor oversight to them. “Oh yeah, we forgot the altar.” The altar is the place where we meet God. It's the place of sacrifice, that God is calling us to come follow Him. But religion doesn't get it. And what

you're going to see as we go through Chapter 11, is not only the desecration of this city by the Gentiles not recognizing anything as being holy by God, but what you're going to see is their hatred for these two witnesses. Because everything about these witnesses is proclaiming the altar. That's what they're going to be proclaiming. They're going to be proclaiming the message of God's grace and the power of following Him, and the power of sacrifice. That's what we're going to be proclaiming. But the world hates that. And they're going to hate it so much that they're going to be slayed by the beast, and the whole world is going to celebrate their death as they let them lie in the street for three days. And they're going to give gifts to each other in so doing. That's why the passage is going to say, "You know what this Jerusalem is? It's like Sodom. It's like Egypt." Now, why would he throw in Egypt? Perfect sense. There's no place on the planet that was more religious than Egypt, that had more gods. Everything they built was to a god. And they worshipped all many different kinds of gods. That's why you had to go through all those plagues, is because they had so many gods that you have to deal with. There

is no place more religious than Egypt, but they're outside. And the perspective is that, "Outside? Who's outside?" See, we're inside when we're at the place of sacrifice.

So, I close with this passage, and certainly, it's such a great text. We'll look at this a little bit more next week. But if you look with me in Hebrews 13, we'll come to this marvelous passage in closing. I like the way that Chapter 13 brings the book to a close.

And it is in that wonderful phrase,

(Hebrews 13:1) "Let love of the brethren continue."

Now, you can go to some of these great edifices, but one of the things that you don't feel is love. I hate to say it, but it's just not there. It's grand, it's seemingly glorious, but all of those are outside. So, he tells them not to be carried away by lies. He'll state that in verse 9. The one thing that we know, according to verse 8, is that Jesus never changes, right? That's our solid rock.

His statement is, if you'll pick up with me in verse 9,

(Hebrews 13:9) "Do not be carried away by varied and strange teachings; for it is good for the heart to be

strengthened by grace, not by foods, through which those who were so occupied were not benefited.

(Hebrews 13:10) We have an altar from which those who serve the tabernacle have no right to eat.

(Hebrews 13:11) For the bodies of those animals whose blood is brought into the holy place by the high priest as an offering for sin, are burned outside the camp.

(Hebrews 13:12) Therefore Jesus also, that He might sanctify the people through His own blood, suffered outside the gate.

(Hebrews 13:13) So, let us go out to Him outside the camp, bearing His reproach.

(Hebrews 13:14) For here we do not have a lasting city, but we are seeking the city which is to come.

(Hebrews 13:15) Through Him then, let us continually offer up a sacrifice of praise to God, that is, the fruit of lips that give thanks to His name.

(Hebrews 13:16) And do not neglect doing good and sharing, for with such sacrifices God is pleased.”

“I'll meet you at the altar.” The guys, in all the glory, are not invited. And it is the great message that we're going to see through the Book of Revelation, that how does religion accept the truth? Why is it that even among those that proclaim to be the faithful, they seem to be outside by virtue of the things that they've embraced? Be careful what you love, or it's going to put you in the wrong place. Keep bringing yourself back to the altar.

Closing Prayer:

Father, we give You thanks for Your word. It takes us to that place, that abiding place, that never-changing place of Your love. It was in the Holy of Holies that this wonderful ark of the covenant had on top of it this wonderful, wonderful seat called the mercy seat. It was there that You were proclaiming to all of the angels in heaven, “Not law, but mercy will reign.” And the angels would be forced to bow to that declaration. Lord, we give You thanks for calling us to Your side. Little did we know that it would be at the place of the altar. Little did we know that it would be at the cross, at the cross, that we

would actually first see the light, and that all that our burdens would roll away. But it would be there by faith that we would actually see by sight, and You would bring us happiness for the rest of our lives.

Revelation wants you to think really long and hard about what you believe. It wants you to see what God sees. It wants you to understand what is real and what isn't. Throughout the book, God is measuring things. He's showing us standards. He's drawing lines. Because the world has so blurred those lines; the church has allowed the lines to blur.