

07.26.20

Revelation

Chapter 9 - Revealing the Forces of the Heavens

The Powers of the Air (7 Trumpets)

The 6th Indictment Against Ravenous Power (vs. 12-21)

Revelation 9:12-21: The first woe is past; behold, two woes are still coming after these things. Then the sixth angel sounded, and I heard a voice from the four horns of the golden altar which is before God, one saying to the sixth angel who had the trumpet, "Release the four angels who are bound at the great river Euphrates." And the four angels, who had been prepared for the hour and day and month and year, were released, so that they would kill a third of mankind. The number of the armies of the horsemen was two hundred million; I heard the number of them. And this is how I saw in the vision the horses and those who sat on them: the riders had breastplates the color of fire and of hyacinth and of brimstone; and the heads of the horses are like the heads of lions; and out of their mouths proceed fire and smoke and brimstone. A third of mankind was killed by these three plagues, by the

fire and the smoke and the brimstone which proceeded out of their mouths. For the power of the horses is in their mouths and in their tails; for their tails are like serpents and have heads, and with them they do harm. The rest of mankind, who were not killed by these plagues, did not repent of the works of their hands, so as not to worship demons, and the idols of gold and of silver and of brass and of stone and of wood, which can neither see nor hear nor walk; and they did not repent of their murders nor of their sorceries nor of their immorality nor of their thefts.

The declaration at the beginning of this is, one woe is passed, and there are two more. Woe is always paralleled with the sin of man.

Job puts it this way in Job 10:15,

“If I am wicked, woe to me! ...”

Isaiah 3:11 puts it this way,

“Woe to the wicked! It will go badly with him,
For what he deserves will be done to him.”

The “woe,” once again, is a reflection of what man has done and the reaping of that. Revelation is revealing to us things that are hidden, thus the name “Revelation”. It is God unveiling to us things that have been suppressed and things that have been hidden, and God says nothing is hidden that won't be brought to light. Revelation really is a fulfillment of that, as He begins to bring to light those things that maybe you and I have not recognized.

It's hard for man to admit his sinful nature, although Scripture repeats it over and over again, whether it's in Romans 3 declaring to us that “There is none righteous, no, not one,” or Ecclesiastes 7, “There is no one who does righteousness continually,” or whether it's in a passage like, if you look with me in Isaiah 1, as Isaiah gives the indictment against God's own people, and he says, “Look, you're not as smart as a dumb ox,” which would be kind of a nice way of putting it, I guess.

His statement is in Isaiah 1:3,

“An ox knows its owner,
And a donkey its master’s manger,
But Israel does not know,
My people do not understand.”

(Isaiah 1:4) Alas, sinful nation,
People weighed down with iniquity,
offspring of evildoers,
Sons who act corruptly!
They have abandoned the LORD,
They have despised the Holy One of Israel,
They have turned away from Him.”

“So, where can I strike you?” He says, “I've run out of places to strike you. You're not taking the punishment.”

And his statement is in verse 5,

(Isaiah 1:5) “... The whole head is sick
And the whole heart is faint.

(Isaiah 1:6) From the sole of the foot even to the head
There is nothing sound in it...”

That pretty well covers it, doesn't it?

Jeremiah puts it another way, if you look with me in Jeremiah 17,

(Jeremiah 17:9) “The heart is more deceitful than all else
And is desperately sick;
Who can understand it?”

I know that people have a sense of trying to make themselves feel better about themselves than they are, but the bottom line is, the Scripture says, “You guys are twisted. You're not thinking right.” Jesus conveys that He's going to test the heart.

And this next verse, in verse 10, says,

Jer 17:10) “I, the LORD, search the heart,
I test the mind,
Even to give to each man according to his ways...”

When we come to Revelation, what we're seeing is, though we would not like to admit it, a revealing of men's hearts. As the pit of hell is literally opened within the text, and these demonic spirits are coming out. They are spirits that really represent the heart of man. We understand that a pattern has been formed at the very beginning of

the writing of the Book of Revelation. The pattern is that pictures are going to be showed for the purpose of demonstrating those spiritual truths that you can't seem to get a handle on. So, He's going to reveal them through pictures. For instance, what is the purpose of a church? Well, He puts a picture of a lamp. Okay, so what should you be doing? Shining. And Scripture is very clear about that. What should be on the heart of the church? Well, to let our light so shine before men that they would see our good works and glorify God in heaven; that we are the light of the world in the sense of proclaiming the gospel of Jesus Christ. And as Ephesians 5 says, "You once were darkness, but now you are light. Shine, even expose evil," He says. So, the Church has a purpose. How is it described? As a lamp. Christ has a heart. God has a heart. What is the heart of God? Well, It's the Lamb as if slain. So, He gives the picture of a Lamb that would willingly sacrifice itself for you. That's the heart of God. What a graphic picture that is.

As we come to the trumpets that are blown and now these angelic beings are opening up the pit, okay, we've

already had the stage set, that everything that's coming out is going to reveal what's in our hearts. And as we have seen at the very beginning, it doesn't look good. In fact, the very beginning was really an indictment against an insatiable pain that we have. You say, "Well, are we causing ourselves pain?" You're causing yourself pain, and you're causing other people pain. Why are you doing that? Because of your greed. That's one of the reasons why demonic spirits that are coming out of hell are like locusts. You can't feed them enough. They have this insatiable desire for more. They never can get enough. And so, as Paul so aptly puts it in Philippians 3, "whose God is their appetite." And that really is the way that greed takes you. Because once you start going down that road of greed, before long we get ourselves in a frenzy and we just can't seem to get enough. We just have to keep getting more and more and more. More never satisfies. So, what an interesting picture. Now, let me just say this. When it talks about these demonic spirits that are coming out, are they real? Yes. But they've taken on the form of man's desires. That's a very interesting thing. And so, as they come out, God is revealing, is this what

you wanted? Was this the desire of your heart? Is this what you want to look like? Is this what you want your life to be like? Galatians 5 says, you have freedom, only don't use your freedom to devour one another, but use it to serve one another. Man has taken on the persona of certain horrific creatures and literally, Jeremiah is saying, "You have no idea how desperately sick you are." And most people would say, "Yeah, we have no idea." And God says, "Okay, We'll open up the pit and show you." And so, as the pit is open, you see these demonic spirits, it's us. It's us. That's why Scripture says man in his arrogance is like a beast. And when it comes to the end of the Book of Revelation, the mark of the beast is the number of man. Man has become the beast with an insatiable desire for more. We come to the description here, we not only see an insatiable desire for more that brings pain, but we'll see a ravenous desire for power. And man has both the ravenous desire for power as he has an insatiable longing for more.

By the way, if you look with me in 1 Timothy 6, it warns the church, and just by way of reminder, this letter is

written to the churches, right? So that it's not God necessarily warning the church about the tribulation because they're not going to be in it but it's about allowing these things to infiltrate the church today. What He's doing is He's revealing just how horrible these things are so that you can see, "Well, I don't want that in the church." And it's a desire to get us to think in a different way. In 1 Timothy chapter 6, he talks about leaders and people who want to be leaders within the church for the sake of making money. Does that sound bizarre to you? But that's what people are doing. They're using church to make money. They're peddling, as Paul says, "We're not like many." That's a strange, strange phrase. "We're not like many peddling the Word." Even in that time, in the early church, a lot of people were trying to make money, like Simon, as in the early stages of Acts, was trying to buy the Holy Spirit, trying to make money through the gospel or through maybe a facsimile of religion. Paul says, "We're not like that because we know that obscures the truth." If you go after money, you're obscuring the truth. What's the truth? The truth is that God loves you so much that He gave. He didn't take from you. He gave. So, the

gospel has nothing to do with going around taking for people. It has everything to do with God giving to people. But in 1 Timothy 6, there was a concern that there were those that were entering into the ministry because they perceived that the ministry was a venue to gain money.

The passage reads this way in 1 Timothy 6,

(1 Timothy 6:3) “If anyone advocates a different doctrine and does not agree with sound words, those of our Lord Jesus Christ, and with the doctrine conforming to godliness,

(1 Timothy 6:4) he is conceited and understands nothing; but he has a morbid interest in controversial questions and disputes about words, out of which arise envy, strife, abusive language, evil suspicions,

(1 Timothy 6:5) and constant friction between men of depraved mind and deprived of the truth, who suppose that godliness is a means of gain.

(1 Timothy 6:6) But godliness actually is a means of great gain when accompanied by contentment.

(1 Timothy 6:7) For we have brought nothing into the world...

Obviously, he's talking about monetary stuff in this text.

“For we have brought nothing into the world, so we cannot take anything out of it either.”

That's a biblical quote, just to let you guys know. I've heard a lot of people quote it, but they probably didn't know where it came from.

(1 Timothy 6:8) “If we have food and covering, with these we shall be content.

(1 Timothy 6:9) But those who want to get rich fall into temptation...”

Who's he talking to? I just want to let you know, this is a pastoral epistle, which means what? He's writing to pastors.

“But those who want to get rich fall into temptation and a snare and many foolish and harmful desires which plunge men into ruin and destruction.

(1 Timothy 6:10) For the love of money is a root of all sorts of evil...”

Pain, sorrow, and hurt.

What is He telling us at the very beginning there in Revelation when you see these beasts coming out like locusts and devouring everything in sight and causing pain to man like bringing in much poison within their system? What is He telling you? What He's telling you is that the love of money is going to bring a lot of pain and has been. The greed of man has brought tremendous pain. And so, what you're going to see in that final day is the physicality of that desire. You say, "Pastor Gary, are you telling me they're really going to be these creatures coming out of hell?" Yes, there are really going to be these creatures coming out of hell. This is not some kind of facsimile or metaphor. This is actually going to happen. But they're taking on the persona of heart. And what an amazing picture it is. It should be convicting our hearts. We should be saying, "I don't want to have anything to do with this." And this is what's going to be the most bizarre thing that's going to come out of the text. The most bizarre thing that's going to come out of the text is that men are going to see the result of their desires and still not repent of

their ways. “Oh, if they could just go to hell, they would never go back again.” Well, we'll see, because hell is coming to them. And we're going to see what's going to happen if, in fact, they were to come face to face with their own wicked desires, what would happen?

The passage then, if you go with me back to Revelation, we'll pick up, not only is there an indictment against the insatiable pain that is caused through, I would say, greed, but there is an indictment in this particular text, as we begin in verse 12, against the ravenous desire for power. Ravenous power, always wanting more. We use the aphorism that “power corrupts, absolute power corrupts absolutely.” And we know this to be true, and yet man just keeps wanting more power. It's almost like he's embracing the corruption of sorts.

So, as we come to this passage, what we're going to see is that grand desire for power, and the way it's described, if you look with me in verse 13. All the imagery that's given is focusing on man's embracing of power throughout the time of human existence.

If you look with me at the very beginning, it says,

(Revelation 9:12) “The first woe is past; behold, two woes are still coming after these things.”

Once again, “woe” connected with the wickedness of man.

And if you go into verse 13,

(Revelation 9:13) “Then the sixth angel sounded, and I heard a voice from the four horns of the golden altar which is before God.”

Now, just want to emphasize, “four horns” is making reference to power. Horns is always the symbol of power. So, you have the four horns, which is an interesting picture of, as Scripture will go on to say, the four corners of the world. And here again, if you have a hard time with four corners, north, south, east, and west; God displaying that there is an insatiable or tremendous, ravenous desire to what? To conquer the world. North, south, east, and west.

If you look at the passage, the fact is that these four horns are on a golden altar. You see that? Now, the point is that there is a willingness to sacrifice men for power. So, it's

not a complicated picture. Whatever it takes, we're going to sacrifice so that we can obtain power. So, you have the four horns that are displayed there. By the way, “golden altar” is making reference to something that is valuable, of course, most valuable to them. What's the most valuable to them? Power.

(Revelation 9:14) “one saying to the sixth angel who had the trumpet, “Release the four angels ...”

Once again, why four? Because this is a worldwide, I mean, you just can't get enough. Power always wants more, just like greed wants more.

“... “Release the four angels who are bound at the great river Euphrates.””

Oh, so, it kind of began in Euphrates with the tower of Babel. It's going to end there. But more than that, Euphrates is representing something that is abounding. “Euphrates” actually means an abounding river. And the emphasis, of course, is that man goes for that which promises him. Once again, we quoted you the text in Isaiah where he says, “Why did you reject the gentle flowing river of Shiloah and you went to the Euphrates?”

You went to the Nile. You longed,” as Jeremiah 2 would say, “for the wrong things.” So, the picture is, of course, this place of war and of power. And it was the place in which power was first established. So, what He's going to reveal is there are four major powers that were established at the Euphrates. These powers have never been matched ever since the world. And the reason why is these four major powers literally, in their day, ruled the world. There is no power that is ruling the world today. But these powers actually did. You have the picture of this ravenous desire, and of course, as Daniel paints the picture of other nations that are coming, reveals them as lions or as leopards with wings or something like that. And all of them, of course, are a picture of a beast that is just ravenous, that just wants to devour. And that's what power does. It wants to conquer and then it wants to devour and wants to take. So, the picture is going to be given to us.

What are these powers? Well, the first power that really came out of this particular region was the Akkadian power, which we understand and know, according to the

Book of Genesis, was actually ruled by a guy by the name of Nimrod. Ever heard of the name? This guy was literally ruler of the world. And according to Jewish ancient Midrash literature, they interject that it was his desire to not only rule the world, but he was the first one to bring war against people. That is to say, he was willing to sacrifice people for power. He was the one that initiated, according to Genesis, the building of the tower of Babel, and he was the first one to initiate slave labor, willingly putting man on the altar for his desire for power, referred to as the “mighty hunter”. He declared himself the god of the skies. And so, as you look into the sky, you'll see this guy by the name of Orion. They declare him the mighty hunter who was Nimrod. It is the same name that was taken on as Marduk, and Jeremiah will give reference to this. In fact, many of the Babylonian kings wanted the name Marduk in reference to the great Nimrod who began this whole power play thing, literally standing for a man who devours people through blood and willing to sacrifice their lives for his power. So, you have this picture of somebody coming from this particular realm. And as

you go through history, there were certain rulers that came into this.

The next, of course, was Assyria. We're familiar with Sennacherib. It was the king before him that really conquered the world. And Assyria became the world nation. It was Assyria that took control of this region of Shinar as Nimrod was also well known for being, which simply means "land of two rivers," Tigris, Euphrates, and they took control. So, in each case, these were world powers. And it was the world power of Assyria, of course, that Jonah hated so much because they were not only ravenous in their conquering, but they also loved to impale people and mock the nations by riding around the city with their family members, impaled on a stick as they rode their horses around the place. They loved war and they loved to murder people. So, the picture of Assyria, of course, it's no wonder, I mean, you've got to feel a little bit bad for Jonah when God says, "I want you to go to Nineveh and I want you to talk to these people." And he goes, "I don't think so. They've killed my relatives and they're heartless." And God says, "You still need to go

because I've sent you." So, maybe you feel a little bit better about the fact that he would take that stand. But God is gracious beyond what we can imagine.

After Assyria, of course, comes Nebuchadnezzar who is the greatest and a world power in all of the realm. And after Nebuchadnezzar comes Cyrus. In each case, they reigned in this region out of the Euphrates. So, out of the Euphrates is coming that power, that desire for power, that ravenous devouring power that has really seemed to be focused on this region.

So, the text reads,

"One saying to the sixth angel who had the trumpet, "Release the four angels who are bound at the great river Euphrates."

(Revelation 9:15) And the four angels, who had been prepared for the hour and day and month and year, were released, so that they would kill a third of mankind."

Now, here again, the point is what? War. They want to destroy. I mean, when you consider all of the great powers of the earth throughout history, whoever the

leader was, Julius Caesar, Alexander the Great, Mussolini, Hitler, what did they all have in common? They wanted power and they didn't mind killing people. There was constantly the slaying for power. They were willing to put people at risk which has awfully been a strange thing to me that nations have no problem. This is one of the things that God was trying to convince Israel, He says, "You don't want a king. You get a king, he's going to take your children. He's going to put them in battle for him so that he can get more stuff." He says, "So, you don't want a king." They go, "We still want a king." But we live in a world that sacrifices our children so that we can have power, or we can get the things that we want. God reveals to us that that's the heart of man, and that's the way he perceives that this is how he accomplishes his goal. What he's done is he's convinced the little guys that they're doing something honorable. They're not. They're killing people for power. That's all they're doing. But the fact is, that this has infiltrated our way of thinking to such an extent that we're blinded. When Revelation finally comes and He opens up the pit, He goes, "So, you want to see what it looks like?" The hope is that man would

repent and say, “You know what? I want to follow Christ. That's a different kind of kingdom. I don't want to be like the kingdom of the world.” So, as He goes through whoever the great warriors that you've known down through the centuries, this is what they've had in common.

As we come to the passage, He says they were released so they might kill a third of mankind. Now, the reason why in verse 15 he gets kind of specific about, “were prepared for an hour, a day, a month, and a year,” is not necessarily talking about the period of time in which they were going to be allowed to control. The way that it's written in the Greek is emphasizing the fact that there was a specific time that they would be released. He does it backwards, but His point is, “From the year, the month, the day, the hour, I had ordained for this pit to be open and these powers to be released,” which is telling us that God has control over their coming out. Complete control. This is not something that they planned. This is not something that they orchestrated. This is not them bursting out. God opened it up. I think one of the

encouraging things in Matthew is it says, “Had not the days been cut short, even the elect would not have been saved.” His point is that God was controlling the day, the hour, whatever that was going on.

If you look in verse 16,

(Revelation 9:16) “The number of the armies...”

So, at this juncture, is there any confusion about what we're talking about? Power, right? Armies. So, what are they trying to do? Kill. Right. So, we're pretty clear.

“The number of the armies of the horsemen was two hundred million...”

A sign of immeasurable power. This is the best way to picture it. There's no way you could stand against this power. It's the greatest army that's ever formed. It's coming out. You can't count these people.

(Revelation 9:17) “And this is how I saw in the vision the horses and those who sat on them: the riders had breastplates the color of fire and of hyacinth and of brimstone; and the heads of the horses are like the heads

of lions; and out of their mouths proceed fire and smoke and brimstone."

The very first part, he's talking about that there's riders on these and they have these breastplates and they're deep, dark red breastplates. And I think the imagery is pretty clear. Their heart is hard. Their desire is for blood. I mean, the breastplate is making reference to this is where they are and this is what they desire. Now, as it goes on, the description of the horses is really describing, well, the reason he brings in horse is that which has a resolve that's irreversible. So, it's this kind of quick, resolute, relentless haste.

You see the same example given in Habakkuk 1:6-10, which we talked about the war horses that were trained for this. So, the picture is of one that is going in with resolute, relentless haste. You're not going to stop him. He has a desire to devour. So, there's the horse going in with that resolve, but then the heads of the horses are not a head of a horse, but a what? A lion, which there's the ravenous picture that is given to us, and the desire for that power to come. It's not a mistake that, like Babylon,

gives as one of its symbols of its power, a lion. It's not a mistake that you see those things.

“... the heads of lions; and out of their mouths proceed fire and smoke...”

Suffocating power.

“... and brimstone.”

Which would be torturous, kind of has the sense of really just torturing people.

(Revelation 9:18) “A third of mankind was killed by these three plagues...”

More specifically, these three ways of harming.

“... by the fire and the smoke and the brimstone which proceeded out of their mouths.”

Now, I've heard pastors preach out of this and they go, “Well, you know, these are like tanks with flamethrowers or helicopters or stuff like that.” I might tend to agree with them if in fact they hadn't come out of hell. But you're not going to see these things flying out of the pit. This is a spirit world that is reflecting the evil heart of man.

And if you look verse 19, once again,

(Revelation 9:19) “For the power of the horses is in their mouths...”

What are we talking about? Power. Right. And the word that he uses in the text is “*exousia*,” which means that they have a freedom to act or to do whatever they want to do. And what do they want to do? They want to kill. God placed man on this earth and He goes, “Okay, it's yours to rule. What would you like to do?” He goes, “I'd like to conquer everybody and kill everybody that won't submit to me.” I mean, almost the first thing that Nimrod does is he builds this tower and he says, “I want to subjugate everybody to me. I want everybody to worship me. I want to put them in labor. And I'm going to build these things called cities.” So, he's the builder of Nineveh. He's the builder of Babylon. “So, we're going to build these things called cities. And we're going to build them to, oh, I know what we'll do, we'll tell the people, ‘They're for your protection.’” They're not for your protection. But this is part of the lie.

So, the passage goes on,

“For the power of the horses is in their mouths and in their tails...”

And really, an interesting picture in the sense of this is what they longed and proclaimed was this sense of power. In fact, if you think about it, it's what you're seeing almost constantly on TV. Of course, knowledge is power. But it's man always looking for power or woman trying to empower herself. It's coming out of the mouth of man. And God is saying, “You know what really is coming out of your mouth? Fire, brimstone, smoke. That's what's coming out of your mouth. And someday you'll see what it looks like.” And so, the picture is pretty intense.

By the way, you look at the Book of James, and it just reminds you, watch what you say, because your mouth can set a whole lot of things on fire. Remember James 3? So, it's a really good reminder of that.

“For the power of the horses is in their mouths and in their tails; for their tails are like serpents and have heads, and with them they do harm.”

You can't help but think of serpents when you think of John the Baptist, because the Sadducees and the

Pharisees were coming to be baptized. And he makes this one simple statement. He says, “You brood of vipers, who warned you to flee from the wrath to come?” Now, why would he call them a brood of vipers? The reason why he called them a brood of vipers is that vipers, when they're first born in that particular realm, in that section, they start almost immediately eating each other, and the first one they attack is their mother. And so, the picture is that “You're just a group of people that just want to destroy each other.” And of course, Pharisees and Sadducees were always trying to destroy each other until they found Jesus and then they worked together to destroy Him. But they were always that way. So, it's a picture of that.

It says this, if you look with me in verse 20, which is really the key of the text,

(Revelation 9:20) “The rest of mankind, who were not killed by these plagues...”

More specifically, by these afflictions.

“... did not repent...”

Because what Scripture is revealing to us, “This is you. This is your heart.” Remember what Isaiah said. The things that you do, the evil you do, is what will come back to you. That's the judgment that comes back. So, what's being released is a judgment upon man. And yet, seeing the hurt and the pain and the destruction that is caused, they still refuse to think differently about what they do, is the point. Once again, to remind you, “*metanoeō*,” making reference to thinking differently.

“... did not repent of the works of their hands...”

The undertakings of their life; the pursuits that they have.

“...so as not to worship demons...”

Now, the picture is one of kissing the hand or the ring of the one that you worship. It's bowing down and giving homage to. And so, it has an interesting picture of bowing down and kissing the ring finger. They kiss the ring finger of what? Demons. Now, once again, just to remind you, demons have as its root, “distributor of fortune.” So, maybe they were trying to make a deal with the devil type of thing.

“... did not repent of the works of their hands, so as not to worship demons, and the idols of gold...”

Obviously, we're dealing with distributors of fortune here.

“... and of silver and of brass and of stone and of wood, which can neither see nor hear nor walk.”

You might want to underline the word “idols” because it has the connotation of an image, and more specifically, of an image of the mind. The point is that you have your own image of what's important and you embellish it the way you think is valuable. You have your invention of your head. “Oh, I think this would be great. I think this would be wonderful.” That's an idol. And once that begins to take control and you begin to invest where your treasure is, there will your heart be also. Once you begin to invest in it, then that's telling you, okay, that's what your idol is. It's the imagination of your thoughts, the desires of your thoughts.

He says,

“... which can neither see nor hear nor walk;
(Revelation 9:21) and they did not repent...”

Now, here again, what have we been seeing coming out of the pit? Murder and killing. Right.

“And they did not repent of their murders nor of their sorceries...”

Once again, the word “*pharmakeia*” is where we get our word “drugs”. They would not repent of their drugs. Why? Because their drugs was a god to them. It was something of their imagination. It allowed them to go where they wanted to go and do what they wanted them to do. That's why drugs are very dangerous, because it's taking control of your mind. Scripture says, “Taking every thought captive to the obedience of Christ,” drugs will take you into another realm.

“And they did not repent of their murders nor of their sorceries nor of their immorality...”

Which is inappropriate intercourse with anything. You know, fellowship with non-believers is an inappropriate intercourse. It could be talking about sexual immorality as well.

“... nor of their immorality nor of their thefts.”

That's so bizarre to me. “Oh, if they just had a chance, surely people will repent.” Not true, and Revelation is revealing that to us.

Scripture tells me that I have a Savior whose heart is like a lamb as if slain. And there's an interesting picture that's given to us in John, and I kind of want to close with this particular passage.

If you turn me to John 10,

(John 10:7) “So Jesus said to them again, “Truly, truly, I say to you, I am the door of the sheep.”

(John 10:8) All who came before Me are thieves and robbers, but the sheep did not hear them.

(John 10:9) I am the door; if anyone enters through Me, he will be saved, and will go in and out and find pasture.”

Now, the picture here is clear. We don't have a “Nimrod”. We have Somebody that wants to give us freedom.

(John 10:10) “The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I came that they may have life, and have it abundantly.

(John 10:11) I am the good shepherd; the good shepherd lays down His life for the sheep.”

Now, is that a different kind of government or what?

(John 10:12) “He who is a hired hand, and not a shepherd, who is not the owner of the sheep, sees the wolf coming, and leaves the sheep and flees, and the wolf snatches them and scatters them.

(John 10:13) He flees because he is a hired hand and is not concerned about the sheep.

(John 10:14) I am the good shepherd, and I know My own and My own know Me,

(John 10:15) even as the Father knows Me and I know the Father; and I lay down My life for the sheep.

(John 10:16) I have other sheep, which are not of this fold; I must bring them also, and they will hear My voice; and they will become one flock with one shepherd.

(John 10:17) For this reason the Father loves Me...”

Why? You read it, underline it in your Bibles. Why does the Father love Christ? Why is Christ the exact representation of the nature of God? How can Christ be

God? Because only He loves like this. There's nobody like Him. He lays down His life for the sheep. That is so unlike the world. The world doesn't want to repent of their way. They'll send you out, send anybody out, to go get their power for them. But we have One that gave Himself for us, and we would not follow Him? It just doesn't make a bit of sense, does it, when you think about it? It doesn't make any sense why I wouldn't make Christ Lord of my life. The Bible tells us that Christ who bore our sins is going to come again, and He who knew no sin became sin on our behalf, that we might actually be the righteousness of God through Him. I can't imagine not following Him. Revelation is making everything so clear and it's saying, "Look, churches, you don't want to let this stuff get into your church." The compromise of Jezebel was coming into one of the churches of Thyatira. Churches of compromise, things were coming in, and Laodicea was embracing money, and He says, "Don't." It has this insatiable craving for more. It's never satisfied. It will just devour everything. He's warning the churches, "Don't let this stuff come in." This is what the church is about. And what a wonderful truth as we realize that our

Lord and Savior is absolutely nothing like any of these that we have seen. What a wonderful, wonderful truth. Shall we bow our heads.

Closing Prayer:

Father, I want to thank You for Your lovingkindness to us. And we come to You because You're so very different. The heart of man is desperately sick, but we look at the heart of You and it's so clear, so unadulterated. You care for us. Your word tells us that we can cast all of our cares upon You because You care for us. We sing the song, "*No one has ever cared for me like Jesus.*" We had no idea that this was in the hearts of men. And no wonder there was so much pain and sorrow and grief. For man has subjected himself to these things that embraced the gold and the silver of the fragments of his mind and the imaginations have been allowed to wander into places that have only caused more pain and murder towards people. You tell us in Your word, "What's the source of your quarrels? Why do you hate each other? It's because you lust and you

don't have and you want more. Come unto Me, all who are weary and heavy laden, and I will give you rest.”

With your heads bowed and your eyes closed, I'm asking you to give your life to Christ, to not have anything to do with the affairs of this world. Look, we're in the world, but we don't have to be of it. We don't have to think like them. We have a greater King and a kingdom that is worth following. He has given us standards that, well, “Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.” How great is that? Why wouldn't you devote your life to Him?