

Revelation 1:19

Sunday 11/12/2006

SEC: God's System of Sevens and the Book of Revelation

I told you over 800 times in the Old Testament, God tells you that He does things by sevens. The first time you find it is in the early part of Genesis, in Genesis 1 or 2, where He says He created, and He rested the seventh day. The Bible says He sanctified it; that means He set it apart and He made it holy. From that point on, over 800 times, God shows you that through the Bible. If you want to find out how God does things, He does it by a system of sevens.

It is no wonder that the Bible itself, the key to learning it, the key to understanding it, the key to unlocking it, is understanding that seven system. That is what we have been coming through. Last week we told you that this time we are going to take a book of the Bible, the only book in the Bible that I know of that the key to understanding it is following the systems of seven: the book of Revelation.

This is not going to be verse by verse of the book of Revelation, but it is going to give you so much information on so many different things. It is going to be something we are going to take our time with. There is no hurry to get through it. I want you to understand how you apply this to this book of the Bible, the only book in the Bible that the complete understanding of it is laying itself out to you by the system of sevens.

I guess probably the two most important books in all of the Bible, if you want to unlock the Bible, will be the book of Revelation and along with that will be the book of Daniel. Those two books go hand in hand. Consequently, you hear today that those two books are the hardest books in the Bible. Not really. No, those two books, once you get the book of Revelation down, which is fairly easy if you follow God's system, the book of Daniel falls right in line. These are things, again, that we can talk about on Thursday night as we come through it and begin to put the material together.

SEC: John, The Christian, and the Heartbeat of God

You remember last week we laid some background. I showed you how John, the Apostle John, was chosen to write the book of Revelation. The reason why that is, is because John in your Bible is a picture of you and I. John is a picture of a Christian who goes all the way with the Lord Jesus Christ.

Remember I made reference to the twelve apostles, how that they really represent the three types of Christians that you are going to find down through history. You had the group that is called the inner three: Peter, James, and John. They are always connected with more spiritual things than the rest of the apostles. When the great miracles are done, it is Peter, James, and John. But then we go to the crucifixion and we find at the crucifixion that two of the three forsake the Lord. The only one that goes the distance is John. So John represents something for us that is very, very, very important in the Bible. That is why he was chosen to write the book of Revelation. God revealed to John the book of Revelation, which lays out all the material found throughout the Scriptures.

Now John is a type of you and I. When I see that God picked John to lay it out, and I see what John represents, then I understand that God wants to reveal to me what the book of Revelation is all about, as He does the whole Bible. The key in John's life is one place in the Bible, and that is the place, and I said this last week, that is the place where he literally lays his head on the breast of the Lord Jesus Christ and hears the heartbeat of God.

No other man throughout the Bible, no other man no matter how good his relationship was—not David, not Solomon, not Abraham, not Isaac—no other man in the Bible hears what John hears. He hears the very heartbeat of God encased in the flesh of the Son of God as God was manifested in the flesh. Incredible concept. It shows me that where you and I should be today as a child of God is hearing God's heartbeat.

Of course, we have every idea in the world on that. You will ask one guy, "What is the heartbeat of God?" He will tell you the heartbeat of God is the souls of man, so we ought to be soul winners. I agree we ought to be soul winners. Somebody else will say, "Well, the heartbeat of God is world mission, so we ought to, for God so loved the world that He gave, so we have to send people." I agree that missions is a vital part of any church and any Christian's life.

But the heartbeat of God, the heartbeat of God is neither of those. The heartbeat of God, my friend, is truth. Without truth, nothing else in Christianity makes any difference. That is why when John laid his head on the very breast of the Lord Jesus Christ and heard from God incarnate the very heartbeat of God, that is the same heartbeat that you and I will hear because God's heartbeat is found in this book of truth. If you want to find out where God is going and what God is doing, it will be this book that will unlock it.

SEC: John's Vision and the Three Tenses of Revelation

I told you that John was on the Isle of Patmos in 90 AD. God took him forward in time. He took him forward in time to the second coming of the Lord Jesus Christ, a time even beyond where we are at today. Then John was told to write.

I gave you the two key verses in Revelation: Revelation 1:10, which says that "I was in the Spirit on the Lord's day," that is when he was taken ahead. And in Revelation 1:19, where God tells him to write. When God takes him to the second coming of Christ and plants him down at the great Day of the Lord, He tells him to write in three tenses. He tells him to write what has been, He tells him to write what is, and He tells him to write what shall be.

I told you last week that on a piece of paper, and I hope that you did this, if you did not, you can do it now and we will add to this as we go through, you have to put an eight-inch line. At each end of that eight-inch line, at the beginning, you want to put 90 AD. At the end, you want to put Revelation 22. Then you want to measure up two inches or thereabouts, you can just estimate it at the two-inch mark. You want to draw a line up. Then at the six-inch mark from the beginning, you want to draw another line up. That first line you want to put "the rapture of the church" at the two-inch mark. On the six-inch mark, you want to put "the second coming of the Lord Jesus Christ."

Now that is what John has got. It is very simple, very basic, but the key to understanding the book of Revelation. John goes up to the, he is taken up to the six-inch mark. At the six-inch mark, the second coming of Christ, he is told to look back. He is told to write those things that he has seen. The things that he has seen from that vantage point will be the Tribulation Period, and then before that will be the Church Age where you and I are living right now, and then right back to the beginning of 90 AD where he was.

When he is told to write the things that are, he is standing at that Day of the Lord, the second coming of Christ, looking backwards and forwards. So he is writing about the events that take place at the second coming, called the Day of the Lord in your Bible. When he is told to write the things that shall be hereafter, then he is talking about the events that take place after the second coming of Christ. This would be Revelation 20, 21, and 22. We find the Millennium in Revelation 20, the new heavens and new earth in Revelation 21, and of course eternity in Revelation 22.

So with that little concept in mind, now we are going to move on, and that is where we came up to last time, and there is a lot of stuff here that we have got to get. So you have to bear with me because it does not do me any good to hurry through this without you understanding it, because my goal is to turn out some men and women. I know this is not true of everybody, but my goal is to train up men and women who want to learn the Scriptures and understand where they are at and how to apply them to their life in every aspect.

Let us pray. Father, we thank You and praise You for the Lord Jesus. We love You. We ask You this morning to meet with us, give us wisdom and insight in all the things that we do, and we will thank You and praise You in Jesus' name for His sake we ask it. Amen.

SEC: The Seven Churches of Revelation: A Goldmine of Information

It does not take long once we start to read the book of Revelation. In Revelation 1, down around verse 4, we find our first series of sevens, and it is seven churches. These seven churches hold a goldmine of information. I try to prepare this; I have so much in my own mind and so much in my Bible and so much I have referenced out over the years that I do not even know where to begin to start with it all, but I try to make some sense out of it for you. These seven churches are just an absolute goldmine of information for the Christian.

This is why John was told seven times to write the little phrase that you and I are supposed to hear what the Spirit says unto the churches. Seven times: in Revelation 2:7, in Revelation 2:11, in Revelation 2:17, in Revelation 2:28, in Revelation 3:6, in Revelation 3:13, and in Revelation 3:22, you are told specifically that if you have an ear, you need to hear what the Spirit is saying to the churches.

I said this last week, I am going to say it again. Anytime the Holy Spirit of God stops in what He is doing and tells you that if you have an ear, I heard an old preacher say one time, "Everybody says the book of Revelation is a hard book, not a hard book. The Holy Spirit of God told you it was an easy book, if you just bother with it." Somebody said, "Well, what do you mean?" He said, "He did not even say you have to use both ears, just an ear." If you just give God one ear

and you pay attention to what is said in the book of Revelation about these seven churches, you are going to learn a lot. So seven times He tells you that, and it is an incredible concept.

SEC: Applications of Scripture: Historical, Doctrinal, Practical

Now I want to look this morning and begin to look at these seven churches using what we already have learned. I have told you from day one, and we have worked it through everything that we have done, how that the Bible has three applications.

- 1.) There is a historical application. What does that mean? It means it actually happened in history.
- 2.) There is what we call a doctrinal application. What does that mean? It means that whatever I am reading has some kind of prophetic meaning up against going toward the second coming of Christ or the end times.
- 3.) Then it has what we call a practical, sometimes it is called an inspirational, application. What does that mean? That means that you and I can get something out of it daily.

So the Bible has a historical application as far as history. It has a prophetic application or doctrinal as far as prophecy, but then it also has an inspirational, something that you and I can get. I have told you many, many times, and I say it again today, that the real strong Christian will have a balance of all three of those. If you only get a balance in one or get one of them, you are out of balance. You have to get all three.

That is why you have people who are great in prophecy. They know how many warts the Antichrist has on his nose, but when it comes to everyday Christian living, they cannot make it. You see, then you have some of God's good people that they have a great devotional, but they could not figure out where they are at in relationship to Christ or the life dependent on it. You have to have a balance between these three. That is what I try to do, and everything that I show you, you will find me making reference to it all the time.

SEC: The Seven Churches: Historical and Inspirational Views

Historically, these seven churches are literally seven churches that are found in Asia Minor in 90 AD. I do not know if you have maps in the back of your Bible or not. Some of you do and some of you don't. But if you have maps in the back of your Bible, you will go back here where it talks about the Roman Empire. See what has got one of the Roman Empire here? Syrian Empire, Greek Empire. Well, that is nice. I like those maps. It breaks it down that way. New Testament Jerusalem, it tells you we have here. Greek Empire, what we have? Well, maybe it is in there. I have to look at it. But what you have, I tell you in my Bible, it is under the Roman Empire. I have got an old Oxford. You will find that those seven churches are right on the coast of the Mediterranean Sea. They are actually seven churches that John writes to, just like the churches that Paul writes to when he writes his book. So there are actually local assemblies that are around in 90 AD that are getting this letter.

Inspirationally, and this is a great study, and boy, there is more on this than we are going to be able to tap today, but please allow me to whet your appetite. Inspirationally, they represent seven

different kinds of churches that you are going to find down through history as far as their personalities and their characters. You know, churches are made up of people, and people are made up of different personalities and different characteristics. If you find that men and women will totally give themselves over as far as letting the Word of God shape and mold their character and their personality, you will find a church that is biblically balanced.

But you are going to find within these seven churches that we are talking about here, you find a lot of churches and a lot of answers to why churches are so different today. Because these seven churches, inspirationally, show us the different personalities or character traits of churches. It all has to do with what the people in those churches and how they apply themselves to the Word of God.

You would go to churches today, and you would find churches that are what we call legalistic churches. In other words, I will tell you what, if you are a lady here and you have slacks on, you are living in sin because women are only supposed to wear dresses. You have some churches that say no women are supposed to wear any makeup. You have churches that say women are not supposed to cut their hair. You have churches that say, and we call them legalistic churches.

You have churches that when you go there, they are terribly unfriendly. Nobody will shake your hand. Nobody says hi to you, and you might as well not even have showed up. You have churches that only cater to the rich folk. You know what? If you are just a common ordinary person, you walk in the door and the pastor is standing there, and Mr. Joe Moneybucks comes in beside you, you are going to get shoved aside. He is going to go after Joe Moneybucks. That is just the way it works, you see? Churches and their personalities will always be in a direct relationship to where the pastor is out in the Word of God, but in a generality, where everybody is out in the Word of God.

You have some churches that are worldly. We have some churches over here in the countryside that I am not going to mention who they are, but a friend of mine went to them, and I knew the kid that was pastoring this church, and at one time he was a Bible-believing kid. But you see, you get caught up in all that stuff, and now you go over there, and when they start their church service, here is how it starts. The guy told me, he said, "I could not believe it, Bob." He said, "I thought I was in a rock concert someplace." He said, "What happened is when the church starts, they have a, you know, church with a stage on it." He said, "The lights go down, and then you have some purple and green lighting comes up in the back." He says, "Suddenly smoke comes out from under the stage. And then the praise band, whatever that is, starts playing praise music, and then the pastor walks up." What an intro. What an intro.

Now, I could never get into that, see? Putting me in supper like that is like eating whipped cream on an onion. It just does not go together, see? I just could not get that way, see? You just could not do that. But, I mean, this guy walks out, you know, and he swaggers, you know, and he does not have a pulpit anymore. Now, I am going to tell you something. You are going to learn some things today. I do not know how far I am going to get in this, so Barb, do not start salivating about getting this outlined because it may not happen today, because I just think, just keep popping.

Do you know any reason why the pulpit that we have is right here in the middle? Do you know back in the Protestant churches, if you would go back in the 1600s and the 1700s, if you would go into a Presbyterian church, the pulpit was over on the side, see? And it was elevated. It was elevated, and the guy went up here, and he had like a little bird cage up here. He stood up here looking down on the people, but it was on the side, see? You would go into a congregational church, it was on the side. It was on the side, see? And it was always elevated. The reason why that is, is because back then they were under the concept that the pastor was above the people. So he had to get above the people because he was elevated to that concept in the Roman Catholic Church. But the pulpit was always up and to the side.

Now, in the Baptist churches, they always put the pulpit right smack dab in the middle. That is a characteristic of a Baptist church. Why? Because in Nehemiah, the Bible says very clearly that when Ezra made a pulpit of wood, the priests of the people, they put that pulpit right in the middle of everything. So your attention would be drawn, and you would understand that the central theme of a Baptist church is this book. So they put it right smack dab in the middle, not off to the side, not up on the same level that you and I are. But that is where it started, you see? Now, how many people know that today? Nobody.

So this guy over here, after the music comes up and the lights go down and the smoke comes out, he swaggers in with his little Ivy League Johnson County sweater on, and sits on a little stool. Then he starts to impart a rap session about the things of God and how great God is. Preaching is gone, you see? Preaching is gone. There are churches like that. You have churches that still believe the Bible is the Word of God. You have churches that understand what the Bible says.

I will tell you right out of the chute, this church, I try to build it as based on the New Testament principles as I know how to base it. I am not interested in worldly things. I am not interested in smoke coming out from under the thing. The only smoke I want coming out is out of my nose when I am putting out the Word of God and torching your rear end. That is all I am caring about, you see? That is holy smoke, see? That is holy smoke. Holy smoke. Yeah, here it comes. Holy smoke. That is where I am at, man. Holy smoke.

Anyway, but you have churches like that. The Bible is a tremendous book. In a couple of months or weeks, whenever I get around to getting it all done, we have got a lot going on right now. I am going to teach a class on you training up your children. We have got so many young couples in here, and your children, you need to have this, your children need to have this, and we are going to go into some great detail and try to help you be a better parent.

One of the things the Word of God does, and one of the issues we are going to talk about, is basically shaping the will of your child. That is what the Word of God does for you as a parent, if you do what you need to do. It actually takes that little child and shapes that child's will toward a direction that you want that child to go in. Obviously, that direction is the right direction. Yet, at the same time, that is what a pastor does with a church. The principles are the same, really. What I do, or what any pastor does, is based on my attitude toward the Bible, based on my approach toward the Word of God. Any pastor will shape the will of any church based on what his attitude

is toward this book. Then you, as individuals, based on what I have done with you, you will make up the personality or the character of this church. See how it works? It is real simple.

Your family, father, will only be as strong and biblically as you are in the Word of God. It is that simple. This church, or any church, or if you ever pastor a church someday, it will only be as strong as your individual character and attitude toward the Word of God. That is why, what book in the Bible, what book in the world can do what the Bible does, you see? I mean, you can go out there, and you have heard me say this before, you can go out there at a Barnes and Noble, or some bookstore, or some public library, and you will find books that, when you read them, they will reform your thinking. You will find books that, when you read them, you will say, "I want to be like that," so it will conform your thinking. You will find some stuff in the books, and you say, "Well, I never saw that before." And you will find books that will inform you in your thinking. You will get a lot of books out there that will misinform you in your thinking.

But, you see, the Bible is different. The Bible does not reform or conform or inform or misinform. The Bible does something the rest of them cannot do. It transforms you. That is the difference. That is what it does. No other book in the world can do that.

SEC: The Bible's Impact on History, Nations, and Culture

In fact, when you see this thing in a bigger picture, it is not just true of churches. All history, and the events of history, and the mindset of history will always be in direct relationship to how the world looks or accepts or views the Word of God. It is one of the greatest things you will ever learn about history, and there is something that, if you are ever going to figure it out, you have to get this. Now that we are coming up into the seven church concept, it is time to give you some of this stuff.

I am saying, the history of the world, the history of the world will always be wherever it is at, good or bad, indifferent or different, as it affects and it looks at and it accepts or it rejects the Word of God. I told you before, all history is nothing more than God moving down through history to accomplish His plan and the devil moving in opposition to cut off that plan. The success of nations, the succession of kings, the success of presidents, the success of economies, the success of everything that a country that makes it its fabric is based on what it thinks and believes about the Word of God.

The two greatest nations on the face of this planet, outside of the nation of Israel, were the United States of America and England. Those two nations were the greatest two nations on the face of this planet. No other nations on earth treat their women with their respect. Sometimes, some of you women, you know, you think that you do not get any respect. Try going over to Saudi Arabia and see how much respect you get. Try to go into Iraq. They make you wear a veil all your, I mean, they treat you like a dog, not as good as a dog. Their dogs they treat better, see. There are only two nations on the face of this planet in the history of the world that ever gave women and viewed them and looked at them the way that they should have, and that is because their, all those two nations were based on and influenced by the teaching and the preaching of this book. That is why their governments were so successful for a period of time. That is why they felt the hand and the blessings of God on them for a period of time.

I am telling you, you see it all down through history. The Dark Ages, which starts around 500 AD and runs up to about 1500, a thousand years, where history is in its blackest point. That is why they call it the Dark Ages. What were the Dark Ages? The Dark Ages were nothing more than the Roman Catholic Church running the world, killing any Bible-believing Christian she could find, wiping out all the Bibles that were the true Word of God from the received line coming down from Antioch. She threw the world into darkness. Because she was in power and she had set up the religious through those nations, the whole continent of Europe went into what we call the Dark Ages.

When did it come out? It came out in a period called the Reformation. When the Reformation took place, Martin Luther and some of the other reformers, they broke from the Roman Catholic Church and they put back into circulation the Bible out of Antioch. That Bible out of Antioch, when it got in the hands of the common man, turned the lights back on in Europe. See, I am telling you, you have to learn this. Every, it is not just churches, it is individuals, it is countries, it is nations. They are so dependent on the blessings or the cursings of God of what they do with this book. Once you see that and you see it down through history, you understand the importance of the seven churches. Because every country is affected by it.

Once the Reformation came into effect in about 1520, it revolutionized the world. The whole world began to open up in Europe and the lights came back on. What did the devil do? I told you now, all history is moving in a direction of God and then a devil to cut it off. God kicked off the Reformation. What did the devil do? The devil brought in about 1600 something that we know in history called the Renaissance. If you want to get an idea of it, go up here to Lawrence at the Renaissance Festival. It is always a fun time. Get you one of them big old chicken turkey legs and walk around with a sword on you and shoot wenches. That is what it is. Guys, lights. They walked around and we know it as a Renaissance.

Do you know what the word Renaissance means? It means rebirth of knowledge. Unfortunately, it was not a rebirth of knowledge in God. It was a rebirth in knowledge of man. Here again, we see Europe crawling back into the dungeons because in time, the next three or four hundred years after the Reformation, where the Word of God made an impact, then the devil comes back with a Renaissance and you see it all going back.

You know what? When you study history, you will find that all art, all music, all architecture, all literature, all will be shaped by man's attitude toward the Word of God, just like it does with churches. It is so true. The history of music is one of the greatest studies you ever take as far as how it works in the Bible.

Now, I do not know if you know this or not, but the original source and the original plan of music is found in Job 38:7. That is where you find that is your definitive verse on what music was originally intended to be.

Job 38:7

When the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy?

Then music in its original purpose was to glorify God. You will find back there in Ezekiel 28:13 that Lucifer, we know about him, we talked about him before, later on he becomes Satan when he falls. We have covered all this, but you will find when Lucifer was put into power, you will find that the Bible says that when God made him, He put in him the ability for music. He talks about tabrets, that is like a piano or a harp, and pipes, like a pipe organ. So in his original function, Lucifer had something to do with music.

So he falls. We find in Genesis 6, we find where Satan comes back and begins to take back all the things that he tries to get. We see God wipes it out with a flood. When we come all through this early on before you get to that point in Genesis 4, you find that you have the line of God and the line of Cain. Right smack dab in Genesis 4:21, in a line of Cain, you find a guy by the name of Jubal. First time you find the word Baal showing up in your Bible. Jubal. We call it Jubal, from which we get the word Jubilant. Jubal. When you come down through that, you will find and study that passage, you will find that he was an excellent person with the harp, there is your tabrets, and with the organ, there is the pipes.

Now we begin to study through the Bible of the two lines of music. One to glorify God, and the other one to glorify man or the devil. When you get into the Old Testament, you find the right line, David and Asaph. David plays the harp. Asaph is his chief musician. You will find that originally the Psalms, which we have in the Bible, the Psalms were sung. They are songs. Because the original purpose of music, and you are going to find down through history, that is exactly the way it goes.

Five periods of music in history. Now this is not a history lesson this morning, but yet it is. But you need to see all this stuff, how it works. Because if you are going to come out of this at the end of the day with a book that you believe, then you have to see what this book and God intended it to be, and the power it has. No other book like it on earth.

When you would go off to someplace and you study music, you would find the first period, it is called the Baroque period. The Baroque period starts at the end of the Dark Ages. It is very primitive. You know why? Because everybody is in the Dark Ages. You have minstrels. You have the folk music and very, very basic. You begin to see some of the playing of more than one melody in the beginning of harmonics. But it is all very basic. Because this world is still in the grasp of the Roman Catholic Church, which has thrown the world into darkness, and therefore, and because of its, everything is shut off.

Then the Reformation takes place. I am telling you, everything on this planet, every government, every church, every individual, every country and every nation is successful or unsuccessful based on what they do with this book. Reformation takes place. That brings us into the Classical period. Now we call all music that is connected with Beethoven, Chopin and all that, we call it all in a big catchphrase called Classical. But in reality, that is not true. Classical period is the second period which starts around the time of the Reformation. You are going to find that this is music that is written to the spirit of man. It is music that is written to glorify God. Why? Because the lights are coming back on again.

So you find men like Bach, Handel, Mozart, Gluck, men expressing their love from God. It is all based on, hey, Handel's Messiah, when they sing that great chorus over here. Now I know that the Mormon Tabernacle choir sings it over here all the time, but just listen to it. When they start getting up there and saying, "And He shall reign forever." That is out of the book of Revelation, see? It is out of the book of Revelation. It is out of the book of Revelation, and Handel is writing, he is writing into that thing everything about God to glorify God. You are going to find during the period of time when the Reformation is on and going, you are going to find that it is men are writing to their spirit. It is music that glorifies God. It is music that brings it to God.

Then we move into the Romantic period. I need to make a statement here. Once the Reformation took place, the Roman Catholic Church immediately within the next hundred years countered with what is commonly called as the Counter Reformation. The Counter Reformation is the Roman Catholic Church going underground to get back everything that she lost. So we find that the Roman Catholic Church through the different movements and different organizations, one of them, the chief organization is the Jesuits. We find a movement called the Oxford Movement. The Oxford Movement was a movement by the Jesuits of the Roman Catholic Church to infiltrate Protestant seminaries. Hence the Oxford Movement. Oxford was a seminary for Protestants at that time. The Roman Catholic Jesuits, which was like the CIA for America, infiltrated all of the seminaries in Europe and then later into America. They had one goal and one purpose. It was to destroy the influence of the Word of God that had come out of the Reformation.

Two hundred years after the Reformation took place, the Lutherans are deader than a doornail. The Presbyterians, the Anglicans, all the Protestant churches that we know of are now back into apostasy because of the Oxford Movement. We begin to see where the lights came on in the classical. Once the Word of God goes and the attitude toward the book goes, it goes right back into darkness. So we have what is commonly called the Romantic period. The chain between the classical and the romantic is very apparent. Where the classical was to man's soul, a spirit, now we see music to man's soul, to man's reason. Man expressing himself not for God's glory, but for man's glory. We see the great Roman Catholic composers, who were either Roman Catholic in their faith or Roman Catholic in their thought: Beethoven, Schubert, Chopin, Mendelssohn.

Which then moves us into what we call the Modern period. Now keep going now. During this time we find all the great philosophers. We find Thomas Paine. We find Hegel. We find Nietzsche. We find all the great German minds and a great humanist and puts across what we know as liberalism today. The music in the modern period even goes even farther. This period, the music begins to paint a picture, vivid, graphic, descriptive. It appeals to the physical senses of sight and sound. One of the greatest examples of this is a guy by the name of Franz Liszt. He wrote The Overture of the Lake Calvary. Most of you do not know that, but you know the tone. It goes like this. You see? You see the guy riding on a horse. It paints a picture. That is what it was all about. It is during this time that you see Wagner. He writes his, one of his, my favorites anyhow is Ride of the Valkyries. Valkyries are demons. It starts out like this. Everybody is just, and then in the background you hear, bum bum bum bum bum bum bum bum and up it comes, man. You see them big demons going after Dorothy and Toto, you know, and Annam and

coming down there those little munchkins, you know, go, oh ee oh, oh ee oh, and down they go, you know. You can just see them flying around there.

That leads us in time to the Natural period, all affected by what men did with the Word of God. You have to see this. The Natural period is man's flesh. Very suggestive. This would be Rachmaninoff, Tchaikovsky. But at times Tchaikovsky gets and writes his 1812 Overture. Do you know how expressive music has got? They are now hauling in cannons. Bang! Bang! Cannons and church bells because he is painting a picture of Napoleon's defeat by Russia in 1812. So you have all the stuff, but it is aimed at man's flesh. You can see it. You can feel it. It starts with guys like him and Stravinsky and Rachmaninoff right down to Jerry Lee Lewis and Great Balls of Fire and Elvis the Pelvis, you see. To the flesh. To the flesh. To the flesh.

As this time goes on, it gets toward man's flesh. Romans 1 says that the basic fire of man is wicked. So all the groups start taking the names of animals. The music becomes the Bunny Hop. The Fox Trot. And then you have Three Dog Night, whatever in the world that was. Right on down to the demonic Kiss. Twisted Sister. To the place where now music has to have something and blood in it. So now you rip chicken's heads off during the concert. You paint yourself up like the Rite of the Valkyries and Wagner's music. Only now you stand up there and nudity, nakedness. Remember all those nine things I told you Thursday night about demon possession on a scale? Well, you find them all on this music. The study of the Natural period is a study of Romans 1.

Romans 1:28-32

And even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a reprobate mind, to do those things which are not convenient;

Being filled with all unrighteousness, fornication, wickedness, covetousness, maliciousness; full of envy, murder, debate, deceit, malignity; whisperers,

Backbiters, haters of God, despiteful, proud, boasters, inventors of evil things, disobedient to parents,

Without understanding, covenantbreakers, without natural affection, implacable, unmerciful:

Who knowing the judgment of God, that they which commit such things are worthy of death, not only do the same, but have pleasure in them that do them.

We find it coming into America through New Orleans, one of the most demon possessed places in all of the world. The only foothold the Roman Catholic Church had. We find it coming through there and we find it coming up through what we know as jazz, which is one of the filthiest godless words that I would not even tell you in mixed company where that word originated from and why. Up through Ben, Glenn Miller, Benny Goodman, so that anybody when you heard "In the Mood," he knew he was not talking about in the mood to go to church.

All history will be in relationship to what man does or his attitude toward the Word of God as far as churches. That is why, you know why in our hymnals we still use that book right there. It says Great Hymns of the Faith. I am going to tell you why. I am going to tell you why, and I am not

totally against some of it. You know, in a little bit, it is okay. I mean, I know it is not all bad, but let me tell you something. Music today in the churches, that mindset from the naturalistic period in the modern has swept right into churches.

I am going to tell you something. The reason why I use that book right there called Great Hymns of the Faith is because those songs were written from 1600 to 1900 when Europe and the great man in the great Philadelphia church age were preaching the Word of God and it was written when one book was in power. The moment the book went, the music went. That is why in our churches today, I am not kidding you. You have to have the lights down. I mean, there used to be a time, I like when a guy or a gal just gets up and sings, holds the microphone, sings or sings and just stands there and sings. But oh no, you see, now that ministers to my spirit. Danny, when he spoke that song today, "He Loved Me," that ministered to my spirit. When I see Scott Rose up here singing, it ministers to my spirit. When Bubba gets up here and does his deal, that ministers to my spirit. When you guys get up here and preach or get up here and sing, it ministers to my spirit.

But you go to most churches and you have somebody up there and you have nine of them all lined up. They are called to pray. They are going to help you worship. Hey, I do not need any help. There is nothing you are going to do for me that is going to help me worship. But no, here is what it is. "Oh Jesus, I love you. Oh Jesus, He is all to me." I was in a church and I closed my eyes and they never knew that it was just he, you know. "Oh He so loves him. Oh He is so sweet." If I close my eyes, I would have been in a bar. I never heard the word Jesus one time. It is all sensual. It is all movement. It is all, why do you have to shake what you own to sing a gospel song? I do not know. Why do you have to be seductive in the way you do it? I do not know. Does God get any honor or glory out of that? I do not think so. I do not think so. But that is where we are at today.

All history follows the law. When I taught you the seven laws, one of those laws was the law of human collapse. Everything goes down, not up. The world and the devil and man will always come to the point where they will always try to go the wrong route. But the impact of the Word of God on men and nations and art and literature and music, it is unbelievable.

I will tell you one of the greatest examples you see it in, and this is an easy one. One of the greatest examples you see when I am talking about how the Word of God impacts churches and builds character and shapes wills and shapes philosophies, not only in churches but in a grandiose scale of nations and kings and people. Churches are made up of people. One of the greatest examples you see of this is how the Bible shapes personalities in churches, people and nations is in our own country, United States of America.

I mean, we just had elections last week. We just did. Does anybody know here where the Democrats and the Republicans came from? I mean, certainly you would not go out and vote without understanding. Do you know why the Republicans are always cited to be conservative and the right one and in some way on God's side, all the pro-lifers and all this over there? And does anybody know why that is true in general sense and the Democrats are always cranked out

as a liberal? Does anybody know? Did you just go and vote without ever trying to investigate that?

Let me tell you something. The United States was founded for the freedom of Bible Christianity. One of the greatest examples that you are ever going to see of how the Bible shapes and influences a country, how men are looking at it. Everybody talks about our Declaration of Independence. Let me tell you something. There were two documents long before the Declaration of Independence came into being that set this country on its course. The first one was while the little pilgrims were still in the Mayflower, and it was called the Mayflower Compact. Those guys in that little boat said that the new government was going to be established for God's glory and the advancement of the Christian faith.

In 1638, a hundred years before the Declaration of Independence, they had together what they called the Fundamental Orders that based this government on the teachings and the preachings of the King James 1611 Authorized Version. Now one of the greatest examples you ever see is how this country and the impact on the Word of God was this country. You see, when you say the Pledge of Allegiance, did not this ever bother you? When you get up there and say, "and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible." See, there is nothing in the Pledge of Allegiance about our democracy. It is a Republic.

Anybody know what a Republic is? You say, "Well, I am a Republican." No, I am not talking about that. You do not even know why you are Republican or why the Republican party tends to have a conservative mindset. You see, when our country got founded, none of the founding fathers wanted a democracy. None of them. They had seen democracies in Germany. They had seen democracies in France. They had seen democracies in Spain. Russia had a democracy. They did not want a democracy. They wanted a Republic.

A democracy by definition is rule of the people, majority rules. If 51 of the people take it, it goes into effect whether it is good or not. But a Republic by definition, you say, "Where do you get your definition?" It is in a book called Blackstone's Commentaries on the Laws of England, which was used in this country from 1776 to 1920. It defines a Republic as a nation or a nation ruled by unchanging laws, i.e., the Bible.

Now, here is how a Republic works. Man never changes what God legislates. If the Bible says, "Thou shalt not murder," you do not vote out capital punishment. If the Bible says that it is wrong to steal, you do not vote that out by a majority. If the Bible teaches abortion is wrong, you do not overturn that with a vote of the people. Where the Bible gives clear legislative concept of right and wrong, a Republic does not try to change that. Now, we have a Republic and we want to talk about should we raise taxes on grain embargo with Mexico or France or Puerto Rico. The Bible says nothing about that. So you can vote that if you want. In other words, the things that the Bible does not legislate clearly, you have the freedom to change by vote. But when it clearly dictates the legislation of the Word of God, that that is the unchanging law that is the basis for a Republic, you cannot change those things.

Now you get into democracy. If 51 people want to do away with capital punishment in a vote, it is gone. You want to legalize homosexuality? 51% it is gone. It is gone. You want to kill

everybody in the world? 51% and it is gone, not with a Republic. Now that is why even this day to day, the Republican Party, even though it is really screwed up, has a tendency or is viewed as being a conservative. Because in its inception, it went back to the founding fathers. That is why the Democrats are always looked at as liberal because majority rules, and you can have 99 people over here that do not like this, and because somebody is in power, majority rule, you can get 51% it is in. That is the difference. That is the difference. That is why the United States was built on that concept. No other nation on earth felt the impact of the Word of God like America did.

This is why you have to see it in our study. You have to see how the Word of God shaped this nation, as it shaped Europe, as it shapes you, as you shape your children, and it shapes this church. The Supreme Court said in 1799, it stated by our form of government, a Republic, the Christian religion was the established religion. Now I have got to stop here and say this. Somebody said, "Well, that is a broad term." Not back then it was not. You only had two religions, Bible Christianity and Protestantism, excuse me, three, and Roman Catholicism. There were no Mormons, there were no Jehovah's Witnesses, there were no Charismatics, there were no Seventh-day Adventists. There was a little split, there was no Church of Christ. Those churches had not even come into existence yet. Nobody in 1799 was going down to a Kingdom Hall or church services. Nobody. They did not come into the middle part of the 1800s.

The stupidest thing in the world is somebody is a Jehovah's Witness or a Mormon or a Seventh-day Adventist and they walk around thinking like they are somebody. Man, you have not been around since the middle 1800s. You could not find a JW, you could not find a Mormon, you could not find a Christian Scientist, you could not find them anywhere in the history of the world when they show up in the middle part of the 1800s. No, no, no. Once the Supreme Court made this statement, they were talking about Bible believing Christianity. Christianity.

So we have an issue today, what we call the issue of separation of church and state. From 1776 to 1940, it was never an issue. Let me tell you, there is nothing in the First Amendment that says anything about separation of church and state. Let me tell you how this thing came into being so you can know how it went out the door. The term started in 1801. You see, when our founding fathers built this country, they came over here for one purpose. Everybody on that Mayflower, as everybody that followed them, in the next 20 years there were 80,000 people. Everybody that left Europe to come to America left for one reason and one reason only. The reason only was that in Europe, they were being persecuted, they were being killed, they were being burned alive, they were being persecuted severely by the Roman Catholic Church, and they came for a country where they could worship God, teach their Bible, preach in their churches, raise their children without somebody in the middle of the night knocking on their door and hogging them off to jail. That is why. That is why. They said, "We do not want any church state religion in."

Originally the separation of church and state was that concept. It was the concept that no state would put in a state religion, that the federal government would not say, "Okay, everybody is born in." See, in Germany right now, when you are born in a German family, you are a Lutheran. In Spain and Mexico and France, when you were born, you are now a Catholic. You do not get the joy, you do not say, "I want to be," you are born, because that is the state religion of those

countries. America did not want that. They felt the oppressive heel of those church states. When they came to America, they said, "Hey, you know what, in this country, we are going to follow the Christian principles. And one of the things we do not want, we will not tolerate, is we will not tolerate the federal government setting up." Every founding father knew exactly what that meant.

In 1801, a group called the Danbury Baptists from Danbury, Connecticut, had heard a rumor that the federal government, Thomas Jefferson was the president at this time, that the federal government was going to establish the Anglican Church as a church state. So they wrote Jefferson. Jefferson wrote them back on January 1, 1802, and stated, "The First Amendment had put a wall between church and state, that no church should be run by the government." Now, that is what everybody quotes. It is the last part of what he said that they just conveniently do not put out. He said that no church should be run by the government, but that the government should be run by Christian principles because it was a republic.

Now, I will show you how this works. I am telling you, from that point up to 1940, when the Supreme Court was faced with an issue of separation of church and state, it was that what they referred to. I will give you an example. The Mormon Church came on around 1820, 1830, and the Mormon Church wanted to indulge in polygamy, more than one wife. The federal government said, "That is against the law. You cannot do that." Well, they brought a suit against the United States and it went to the Supreme Court, the Mormons did. The Mormon Church used the letter that Jefferson had wrote to the Danbury Baptists as proof. Now, get this. It is incredible.

In 1878, not that long ago, the Mormon Church took a suit against the federal government and said, "Look, Thomas Jefferson wrote to the Baptists that the church could not interfere with what the state could not interfere with what the church wanted to do." They tried to use the letter of Thomas Jefferson as proof that the federal government could not say, "You cannot have more than one wife." You know what the Supreme Court wrote back? They said, "You are right, but you did not read the rest of his letter. He said that it was based on Christian principles. The Mormon Church is not a Christian religion, it is a cult." Whoa. You know why? Because back then, they understood what we know today. The Supreme Court used Jefferson's letter up to the 1940s.

You see, the concept of state and church separation has nothing to do with prayer in school. It has nothing to do with prayer before ball games. It has nothing to do with Bible study or reading your Bible in school. It has nothing to do with Easter services or pageants or Christmas or nativity scenes, but rather setting up a church state as in Europe, where everybody has to be one religion orchestrated by the state, which leads to persecution.

This country was founded and shaped and molded by the preaching of a King James 1611 Authorized Version, primarily by two men, Jonathan Edwards and George Whitefield. Add to that, a hundred thousand men and women over the 13 colonies, guys like Peter Cartwright, guys like Francis Asbury, who were preaching the Word of God and the Baptists were everywhere like melted butter on popcorn.

You know the amazing thing about all this? Most of our founding fathers were not Christian. George Washington, our first president, was not a Christian. He was a deist. A deist is just

someone that does not believe that Jesus Christ is God. Thomas Jefferson, orchestrator of the Declaration of Independence, was not even a Christian. Ben Franklin was not even a Christian. Alexander Hamilton was not even a Christian. Here is the point. Back then, unsaved men who were lost without Christ and on their way to hell knew that there was a God and a Bible and they revered God in the Bible and had respect for it and knew its principles worked even if they were not willing to believe it. Why? Because of the preaching of men and women.

Let me tell you something. If you want to change this country back to God, it is not going to happen. But if you wanted to, if you wanted to, the way not to do it is to get involved in politics. The way not to do it is to invite all your Christian politicians into your church and tell your people how to vote. The way you are going to do it, if it could be done, is the same way it was done back there. But it is not going to happen. It is not going to happen. Give me a hundred thousand men that will stand in that pulpit and preach this book and lead this country back to God's Word and you will change this country.

Ben Franklin, he talked about George Whitefield. What a great preacher he was, called the Prince of Preachers. Ben Franklin wrote one time, he said, "Every time Whitefield comes to town and I go to hear him preach, I leave all my money at home." He goes, "When I hear the guy preach, I am just compelled to give him everything I have got." He said, "One night at an open air meeting, I was listening to Whitefield, and I paced off one mile from where he was preaching, one mile. And I could hear every word of his sermon clearly." You go up to Boston, the little Boston Commons. I found this about 17 years ago. I had been going up there every year holding a series of Bible conferences and I knew it was here and I wanted to find it. There in the Boston Commons is a little plaque. And another little plaque that says, "On this date, 17 whenever it was, George Whitefield preached and 30,000 men and women came to know Christ as a personal Savior." Now that is power. That is what shaped this country. That is what brought this country. I am telling you, that is what made this country great. It is based on a Republic.

The Word of God shapes the will and the character of men, of nations and churches. Every nation, just like every church, just like every individual, will be what they are, good or bad, based on how they accept or they reject the teachings and the principles of God.

I will give you another great example. In 1776, we had 13 colonies. By 1892, we had 44 states. Each state had to come up with its own state constitution. In those 44 states, they all wrote into their constitution that no man could hold public office unless he believed the Bible was the Word of God. He believed in a literal hell and a literal heaven, in a literal judgment, because he had to understand that someday God was going to hold him accountable for what he did in public office.

The Northwest Ordinance was put out by George Washington and Adams. The Northwest Ordinance was the thing that if you wanted to become one of the states in the United States, you had to do a list of things. One of the things that you had to guarantee in your school system, you were going to teach the principles of the Word of God. So because the founding fathers recognized that what God had done for them, the only way that it was going to be transposed down to future generations was through the educational system. So to get it to become a state,

under the Northwest Ordinance, you had to say, "We are going to teach Bible principles in our schools."

Thomas Jefferson was the orchestrator of the, under Samuel Adams, of our own Declaration of Independence. They took it over there and they looked at it and he brought a draft back and he said, "Whoa, this cannot be. You have only made one reference to God in this." He says, "We as a nation can never forget what God has done." So they sent it back and they put three more references to God in your Declaration of Independence. Who knows that today? Who cares? It is no wonder God said to John, "If you have an ear, you better hear what I am saying to these churches."

All 44 states, all 44 states, by 1892, had in their constitutions, "You have to believe the Bible is the Word of God, you have to believe in Jesus Christ and the Holy, and God the Father." Every one of them, some of them even said you had to be a born-again Christian to hold public office. That is the result of a Republic.

I will give you another great example concerning state constitutions. John Locke, who formed the Constitution for South Carolina, William Penn, who formed the Constitution for Pennsylvania. John Locke said this concerning government. He said, "If you have good laws, you will have good government." That is democratic. William Penn said, "No John, you are all wrong." He said, "The key is not good laws, but rather the key is good men, saved men." He said, "Good laws may not make good men, but good men will never let good laws, nor pass bad ones." Amen, brother.

I am telling you folks, it did not happen with an NIV, an RSV, an ASV, a Good News, Bad News, Living Letters, Dead Epistles, the Queer Bible, the Black Man Bible, the White Man Bible, or books like *Playboy*. It happened with this book right here in my hand.

SEC: The Seven Churches as Church History

Now these seven churches, and their characteristics and their personalities are a must. You have to see, as we get into these seven churches, how the Word of God, not only in a sense of what it means to you and I, shaping our church's mindset, focusing our church and shaping its will and our attitude of heart. Also, you have to see how down through history it did, it shaped countries, nations, kings, queens, how the hand of God is on a nation or not on a nation based on, and you certainly see it in our own country, how we went from where our founding fathers had intended it to be to this amalgamated, unbelievable humanistic mush that we have got today.

I want to tell you the reason for it. This country, ladies and gentlemen, whether you believe it or not, does not make any difference to me. This country now, in 2006, has been a hundred years without a Bible. A hundred years without a Bible that anybody believed was remotely inherent. A guy told me one time, he says, "Well, all these new translations, they are just perfecting what the last one was." I said, "Pal, there has been 150 translations in a hundred years and you have not got it right yet? You are not working on my car. You have a hundred years and 150 translations and you still have to bring them out because they are still not perfect? You have not got it yet?"

You have not got it yet?" Back then, everyone was thinking, no one man puts out, no one God puts out.

Now, these seven churches show you the course of history of the church, from the book of Acts up to the rapture of the church. This covers the span on your eight-inch mark that John said from 90 AD up to the two-inch mark which said the rapture, the things that he has seen looking back. Now, I want to show you how this thing works. Take your Bible and turn to Acts 20. You have to see, and I told you this study was going to be an intense study. I am not just going to glaze over it. There are a lot of things I did not have time to give you this morning. I wished I could have, but you know what? We can get to those on Thursday night. I am telling you, you have to see these things if you are going to be informed.

Now, in Acts 20, you have the start of church history. Let me tell you what we have got. We have come up to 19 chapters in the book of Acts so far. During those first 19 chapters, here is what we have seen. We have seen God transitioning from the Old Testament to the New Testament. We have seen God bringing it in His own time and His own plan from the nation of Israel to a group now called a church. We have seen it start out in the first seven chapters by a man carrying the ministry on his back by the name of Peter. We saw in Acts 9 another man gets saved, his name is Paul, and from 9 on we find Paul carrying the Gentile ministry and bringing it out and explaining it as God designed for him to do. So basically, in the first 19 chapters, we have the transition from the Old Testament to the New Testament, from the Peter in his ministry to Israel to Paul, the ministry of the church, and coming from the nation of Israel up to the church from the Jew to the Gentile.

In Acts 11, we have the great chapter where they are first called Christians at Antioch. From that point on, then we have got three missionary trips that Paul takes out to Gentiles. The New Testament now has fully come full circle. Now in Acts 20, something happens. You know what happens in Acts 20? In Acts 20, it is all over, basically. Technically speaking, the book of Acts ends in Acts 20. You say, "Wait a minute, Bob, I have 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28. What do I do with those?" Let me tell you what you do with them. Technically, in Acts 21, Paul goes down to Jerusalem. He has been warned three times by God not to go, but he goes anyhow. What happens is he gets thrown into jail. He spends the next three years or so in prison, winds up being killed. No more missionary trips, no more preaching, no more going around. He is locked down and the devil has shut down his ministry. So technically speaking, when you come to Acts 20, you come to the end of the book of Acts, even though the last eight chapters deal with Paul's imprisonment and deal with his events that he does, and there is some great material in there. But as far as church history is concerned, it ends in Acts 20, or it starts in Acts 20.

You say, "How do you know that?" Let me show you here. Just hang on. Just take a deep breath. My wife, now that you got her into this yoga, she walks around like this. It depends where you are going. Not yogurt. It is what is it? Yoga. She likes yogurt too. I do not know. Now just hang with me here. Just everybody, put your hands out. Okay, good. It works.

You ever notice in Acts 20, all up through your Bible, you have got a little thing called paragraph marks. Those paragraph marks in your Bible break down your Bible for you. The last paragraph

mark in your Bible is Acts 20:36. There is no more in the rest of the Bible. You ever figure out why? There is a reason why. Church history starts right here in Acts 20, technically. Even though there are eight chapters left, it does not deal with history of the church. It deals with Paul's imprisonment, and there are no more paragraph marks.

Somebody says, "Well, you know, when you start going down through church history, how come God just left you there at the end of the book of Acts? And now we have got, I mean, it is so confusing. There are so many different churches. There are so many different teachings. There are so many different beliefs. Are they all right? Who is right? Who is wrong? I mean, oh, how do you figure it all out?" You have everything you need. You have everything you need.

Now, look at Acts 20. In Acts 20, this is the last church Paul has any contact with. It is in Acts 20:17. This is a great chapter. What he does in his chapters, he bids farewell to the elders of this church. If you would ever take the time to detail this chapter out, he says six things to this church, which are great sermons that any church ought to be doing. But I want you to notice the church down here that he is talking to. Look at Acts 20:17. The name of that church is what? What is it? Everybody together on three. One, two, three, Ephesus.

Now take your Bible and turn to Revelation 2:1. Last church Paul speaks to, and he says goodbye to before he goes down to Jerusalem. He officially ends his ministry, and he has no more contact with churches as an individual. He still writes some books, but he is in prison. The last church he says goodbye to is the church at Ephesus. When you come over to Revelation 2:1, what is the first church that John writes to? Ephesus. There it is. Just that simple. Just that simple.

So when you begin to look at these seven churches, you have the course of church history down through the next 2,000 years. These seven churches will cover the period in the course of church history from Acts 20 up to the rapture of the church.

Now I am going to give you the names of these churches, and I am going to give you their corresponding time period. These are approximate. They are not exact. It did not happen at the end of 200 A.D. on Tuesday morning, January 2, or January 1, you know, that everybody in the Christian world said, "Okay, the next church period just kicked in." No. It is transitions.

The first one you have is Ephesus. Ephesus will start around Acts 20 and bring you up to approximately 200 A.D. The next church will be the church of Smyrna. We are going to go through all these in detail starting next week. The church of Smyrna picks up around 200 A.D. and runs up to about 325 A.D. The next church will be Pergamos, 325 up to about 500 A.D. The next church is Thyatira, 500 up to 1,000. The next one will be Sardis, 1,000 to 1,500. The next one will be Philadelphia, 1,600 to around 1,900. And last, certainly least, is Laodicea, which starts around 1,900 and brings us right up to 2006 where we are at today.

You see, last week I told you the number one problem with God's people is they do not know where they are at. You do not know where you have been, you do not know where you are going, you do not know where you are at. I told you that every Christian needed a GPS, and your Bible is a GPS, a global positioning system. There are two fixed points in that Bible that you can find

out your position. They are found in Proverbs 22:28 and Proverbs 23:10. They are called landmarks, two of them in the Bible. In the Old Testament will be the nation of Israel, in the New Testament will be the body of Christ. You find those two fixed spots, and you can find your position anytime, any place in history of the world. That is the way it works.

The book of Revelation was given to you by God through John, a type of the church, a type of the Christian to get you and me, no matter where we lived, a fix on your position in history in relationship to the second coming of Christ. This is what Job talked about in Job 24:1, my favorite verse for the last six weeks, where he says, "Why seeing the times of the Almighty, do they that know him not see his days?"

Job 24:1

Why, seeing times are not hidden from the Almighty, do they that know him not see his days?

How come we are saved and we do not know history? How come we are saved and we just voted in an election last week and we do not even understand the basic concept between Democrats and Republicans? How come we stand there a hundred times a year, probably, and pledge allegiance to the flag when it says "and to the Republic for which it stands," and we do not even stop and think the word "democratic" is not even in the Pledge of Allegiance? Why? See? That is where God's people are at today. That is where we are at today. That is why we need to learn. That is why the book of Revelation and the breakdown of these seven churches, as is all the sevens in the book of Revelation, are absolutely imperative.

When you get the nation of Israel as your first fixed point and you get the body of Christ, the true body of Christ, which we will see in these churches on the second fixed point, you now have your position to go through any place in history and know where you are at. You know, there was an old-time Bible group, I think they are probably apostate now, but in the old days, they were really a good group. You know what they were called? They were called Navigators. Somebody in that group understood what I am giving you this morning and knew how to navigate themselves down through history.

Just as a sailor, a good sailor goes out on a ship, and he is out there in the middle of the night, he does not know north, south, east, and west, he can take that sextant and he can put it up there and he can find a position of two stars and then he can triangulate them and find out where he is at on earth. God has given you the nation of Israel and the body of Christ, and when you see them in history, you can triangulate your position through the seven churches and you know exactly where you are at.

SEC: The Importance of Landmarks: A Cautionary Tale

As a little kid growing up, I read a story. It was in Life Magazine in 1960. It was a story called "The Lady Be Good." The Lady Be Good was a B-24 bomber. In 1943, it took off from a base in Benghazi to bomb the sub pens over there in France someplace. The mission got aborted, and what happened was this B-24 turned around to go back and it got caught up in the nighttime in the storm and it lost the rest of the bombers, and it was flying back and it never had heard from again. For 17 years, the B-24 Lady Be Good and her crew was a mystery.

One day in about 1959, 1960, over in a Libyan desert, a British Petroleum Survey crew was out there looking and they found a B-24 bomber that had bellied in in the desert of Libya. They checked the numbers on it, marked it for a reference, and went on their way and turned it into the Air Force, and lo and behold when the Air Force saw the number on the tail wing it was a B-24, the Lady Be Good. Seemingly the 17-year mystery had been solved. But oh no, no, no, no. When the Air Force got there it was an eerie deal. That bomber had just bellied into that ground. The machine guns still fired, coffee and sandwiches still held in the little compartments. Everything looked like the crew had just disappeared and vanished in that plane that just landed by itself. It was one of the greatest mysteries, and I remember as a little kid just into that, and later on they put a book out called *The Lady Be Good*.

I remember reading and studying it and as the years went on the story unfolded. That same British Petroleum Company was out working at Circle and it found some parachute strips pointing in an arrow. It went on a little bit farther and two months later they found a little camp with three or four bodies in it. It was in that little camp that the story began to unfold and began to unravel. They found a diary by the co-pilot, and in that diary he told the story of what happened to Lady Be Good that night. They found five guys there, about another six months later the Air Force came in, took their remains, took them back home, case closed. Oh no, no, no, no. Two, six months later that same Petroleum Company found another two bodies. Then it found one more body. In fact, those guys without any water, no food to speak of, in the middle of the Libyan Desert where it is 32 degrees at night and 118 in the day, had went 90 miles, the last guy before he fell. They still did not find one guy who made it to the sand dunes to try to get help. He is probably buried in the dunes someplace.

One of the navigators was a guy named D.P. Hayes. He lived in Independence. I tried to find his relatives and tried to, I could not find him. I found his grave where he is buried but could not find any of his relatives. It intrigued me to death. When he got into the diary of this thing, all the agony of those poor guys and what they went through. The navigator missed one checkpoint. Instead of going home to the safety of their base, they flew past it into the desert and their death.

I have often thought about that in a relationship to us as Christians. That Bible has given us some landmarks, folks. You and I are to navigate through history with the understanding that Christ is coming. Everything in that Bible points to one day, the Day of the Lord, the second coming of Christ. God's people today are lost in a Libyan desert because they have lost their landmarks.

I do not want the character of this church to be shaped with anything else than the Word of God. I do not want the shape of this church and the character of this church and the will of this church to be built around anything but that book. The personality of this church needs to be God's personality. Not mine, not yours, not some religious hierarchy, but the God of the universe and the God of that book.

In these last days, as we start to come through the church periods and see these churches unfold, you are going to see not only the impact on nations, like we talked about in music and art and literature, like we talked about in just a small point today, you are going to see its impact on the world. When the world believes that book, it is called the church of the open door. When the

world rejects that book, it is called the church of the closed door. Just that simple. Just as countries and nations and churches are affected by the attitude toward the book, so is our lives. Your attitude toward that book right there today compared to what you have to deal with in the world and where your real love is, is going to be the mark of your defeat or your success. God honors those who honor that book. That is the truth.

Every head bowed and every eye closed. Father, we thank You for this great study. Thank You for the truth of it, Lord. How that it just...