

I. Introduction to the Sevens Series and Revelation

The Church Period. If you remember, or if you've been gone for a couple of weeks, what we have moved into in this series on our studies on the sevens is showing how the book of the Bible lays itself out by the number seven. We have been focusing on that great teaching that when God wrote the Bible, He built it around a system of sevens. If you want to learn how to lay the scriptures out, you just follow that.

We have been coming through a number of things. Once we finished up the last series, I told you that we were going to start the book of Revelation. I wanted to show you how this series of sevens works in this particular book of the Bible. This is not going to be a verse-by-verse study of the book of Revelation, as I told you, but there are some things that you need to see. The thing I want to really lay out for you is how God uses this to give you the information that we need.

Every week, especially as we're looking at these seven churches, last week we looked at the church at Ephesus. I told you to remember how the book of Revelation is John being caught up from 98 A.D. on the Isle of Patmos, taken all the way to the future, and sat down at the Second Coming of Christ. Then God tells him to write, and he writes in three tenses: He writes what has been, he writes what is, and he writes what is going to be. I remember I told you to put a little eight-inch mark on your chart that we would fill in. At the two-inch mark, that's where the rapture of the church would take place. We put all the material correspondingly as we go through it. So there's something to learn about where we're at and what God has for us to see in everything that we're going to talk about within these seven churches. I told you how these seven churches represent the church age from the end of the book of Acts, right up to the time period we're living right now, and right up to the rapture of the church.

There are things that, and there's no way that you're going to remember all of this, but if we can just all get some things about each one of these churches and understand the concept, you will have what most of God's people do not have. I gave you my great verse in Job 24, one of my favorite verses about you and I, now that we are Christians, God's children: "How come we don't know the times and the days of the Almighty?" That's a definite reference to watching and understanding God's footsteps down through history, the progression of God as He goes through history.

Each week, as I said, we want to add to the key issues and concepts that you've learned because, without a doubt, if you're ever going to really meaningfully get involved, every day I just get overwhelmed by what's out there. Looking at this world and how Christianity has just absolutely lost its mind, every day I get blown away. Either somebody talks to me about something, or I see something, or I read something that's going on in Christianity, I just have to shake my head. These are perilous times, ladies and gentlemen, that we are living in right before the Lord comes back. If you're ever going to do anything meaningful for the Lord, if you're ever going to take what time you have left and really try to focus and get something done for the Lord, you're going

to have to understand what we're talking about today. I don't know what else to tell you; it's just that important.

I know that a lot of you are very new Christians in here, and all I can tell you is this: if you continue in the scriptures, and you keep learning, and you get everything that you can, let me help you. Or if you're being disciplined by someone, as I said, you can come over my home anytime, and I will help you lay it out and put it in perspective. You're going to have to use the tools that God has made available for you in this church. That is the only way you're going to learn. When you come through here, I know we're talking about history, and history is very important, but I want to tell you something else: there are a lot of practical things in here that you and I need to glean from.

II. The Importance and Purpose of the Church

I'll tell you one of them. When you start coming through these seven churches, if you don't get anything else out of them, you will realize how important the church and the concept of the church is to God. You've got Christians in this world today who think that church is a non-essential, that they can have a relationship with God without ever going to church. Obviously, you can go to heaven without being a member of a church; church does not save you. There isn't a church on this planet that has the power or the ability to save you. God never intended, when He gave the concept of the church, for it to be the instrument of salvation in your life and my life. That is not the church's function. Once you get saved, and you get saved, as you know from the Bible, by trusting Christ as your own personal Savior. Now, the church may point you to that, but we have a lot of people in the world today who think because they joined the First Baptist Church or some other church back in 1943, that they're going to heaven because of it. That's not the way it works. The church was never designed as the instrument of God's salvation, but rather was designed as the instrument of teaching you after you get saved.

That's why God never intended anybody to just get saved and then trudge through this life, getting a little bit here, getting a little bit there, and then waking up one day after 10 or 15 years and suddenly knowing everything about God in the Bible. God intended the instrument of the church, which we're studying in seven periods of church history, to give you and me as believers everything that we need to help us get through everything in life. I want to tell you something: a lot of getting through the things in life is just simply understanding where you're at in life compared to where Christ's coming is. That may not mean a lot to some of you, but it's a very true statement because God's people today have no clue where they're at; therefore, they don't understand what they ought to be involved in.

Churches today have lost their perspective of their job. There probably is not a big church in this town, or across this country, that doesn't have on their staff some kind of Christian psychologist to help you with the problems that the Bible doesn't deal with. You can go to the phone book, and you'll find list after list of "Christian" counselors of every variety: psychologists, therapists, just counselors that you go to. You spend your money, and when your money runs out, you're suddenly healed. It's all across this country, and the reason it's prominent today, and God's people are sucked into it, is because they have lost the concept of what God has given you in the church.

I had a Christian counselor tell me one time, a number of years ago, and I laughed in his face. He was a saved man, at least I think he was. He told me, "Bob, the Bible contains truth, but I don't believe the Bible contains all truth. I believe there's truth outside the Bible that I have access to because of my education that is not found in the Bible." I'm going to tell you something right out of this gate: that's a lie, and that's not true. There is no truth outside this book. I'm going to tell you something else: you'll never find the answers to your problem outside this book. I'll tell you something else: you will only dig yourself deeper getting into the world situation with all of the stuff that goes on. God's program for you and for me is to get into a book and let a church teach you about the book—the principles, the keys, the understanding of how you apply it to your life.

I want to tell you something else: reading your Bible and coming to church will never solve any problem you have. The only thing that will solve your problem is coming to church, reading the Bible, and then applying to your life what you read. That's what is life-changing about the Word of God. I was dealing with a woman here who comes over, and if you would look up the word 'depression' in the dictionary, this woman's picture is there. She's been going through it for thirty-some years. She's a nice lady, a saved lady, but she's a victim of everything I'm talking about this morning. I was talking with her the first couple of times that we met, and immediately she began to see the light at the end of the tunnel, so to speak. On the third time, when she came up to me after she left, she said, "You know what? The last time I was here, I forgot to pay you." I said, "Yeah, you did. I wondered about that. Didn't know if you wanted me to bill you at the end of the month or not." She said, "My husband told me that I need to make sure I pay you." She asked, "How much for last time and this time?" I said, "Why don't we just put it in one big lump sum because this is probably going to go on forever. How about a hundred million dollars?" She looked at me just like that. Before she could say anything, I said, "Let me tell you something. If I had to charge you for what it cost to solve your problem, there isn't enough money in the world to pay for it, because what it cost was God's Son dying on the cross. That alone was the price tag for whatever problem you've got getting out of it." I said, "If you want to do something for me, bring me some Twinkies." You don't even have to do that, because "freely give, freely receive," but I like Twinkies. Next week, she got me a big old box of Twinkies. I like that. The Bible says, "Thou shalt not muzzle the ox when he treadeth out the corn." That's a verse that says the preacher is allowed to eat from what he does. Don't look at me because you don't like Twinkies, and I do, and you didn't get any. Nothing wrong with that. It's made out of angel food; it's better than some of you who like devil's food cake. There's only one missing translation in the Bible I know of, and that's back in Exodus 16, when the manna came down from heaven. The Hebrew word for manna is 'Ushagoth,' and it's wrongly translated in your King James Bible; it should be 'Uthagish.' 'Ushagoth' is manna, or 'Uthagish' is Twinkies. You can believe it if you want to; I don't care. I know my Bible; what about you? If there's anything I learn out of this, I'm telling you, churches are important. God has a plan for them. God has a purpose for them, and you have a choice: you can get in or you can get out. You can take what God gives you and solve your problems, or you can ignore it, but it's not going to happen where you just wake up some morning and you've got the Bible down. Oh, no, no, no, no. If there's anything we learn from these seven churches, we learn how important the concept of the church is, and you've got a lot of God's people today who don't think it's important. They really do.

With each one of these, as we lay it out, there are some things that we have got to see and understand because it's very confusing today. We talked about it. We're going to lay out where all the churches came from. We're going to lay out where all the different teachings came from. We're going to lay out where all the different denominations came from in time. I told you your Bible is your GPS system. It fixes your relationship to where you're at and what God's doing, and it shows you exactly what God wants you to do.

III. Historical Context: Ephesus and the Two Lines

Last week we talked about the church at Ephesus. The church at Ephesus runs from about 50 A.D. in history up to around 200 A.D. We saw here a church by its own name; Ephesus meant 'fully purposed.' We saw that it was a working church, a laboring church. We saw it was a church that had a good balance. It was a church that proved all things; it tried the spirits. During this church period, we saw the rise of Gnosticism, the rise of a group of men, or a teaching, that was starting to go around in this early church, saying that the pastor, the bishop so to speak, was higher than the ordinary person. It leads to a system whereby all the little guys are on the bottom and all the few big guys are on the top. It leads to a totalitarian system, just like Marxism, Leninism, or communism. It leads to a church-state setup where a small group of men dictate for the world what you are to believe. That's where it winds up.

I'll tell you another great lesson here, another great practical lesson: just as the church of Ephesus was fully purposed to do the work of God, so are you the moment you get saved. I talked about last week how this church had everything it needed to accomplish the mission for Christ—everything. It was at its closest point source to the Lord Jesus Christ of any other church in history. It had everything that it needed; it was fully purposed. It had everything to accomplish that task. The moment you get saved, so do you. Just as there was no reason for that church not to get it done, there's no reason for you and I not to get it done. In fact, the reason why it doesn't get it done is the same reason why you and I won't get it done. It's the same. So there are some great lessons here.

In this church, we saw another great lesson: the farther you get away from the source point of truth, the more the devil has to operate, as Ephesians 4:27 says, "Neither give place to the devil." The farther down this church comes, the more deviation it comes from the Word of God, the more men begin to add things, and the more God's people have to pay attention.

We're coming through the book of Numbers now in our group. I've had two or three groups, and I have another one tonight. I'm looking forward to spending the time on it, but I'll tell you all right up front: the number one thing about the book of Numbers that I get out of it, that is for me, is that the book of Numbers tells me why most of God's people—99% of them—will never do a thing for God in their life. When they start out doing it, somewhere along the line, something will knock them out, and they'll never get back into it again. If the book does anything for me, it shows me, and it does a lot of things for me, but one thing it shows me is why there are four billion Christians in this world today, or so they say, and yet nothing is getting done for the Lord. The book of Numbers tells you that. You also see it in the study of the seven churches why it doesn't happen either.

We see the first deviation starting. God's saving a man who makes a tragic mistake. They leave the absolute teaching of the Word of God and start to add in all of the junk that's being added. We see another great thing: we see the beginning of two lines. We saw it in the Old Testament; now we see it in the New Testament. We saw two lines start in the Old Testament: one was God, one was the devil, all the way back in Genesis. Once we see those lines start back there in Genesis, it started with Cain and Abel. That's where the two lines start. Cain's line becomes Satan's line. Abel's line becomes Christ's line. Your whole Old Testament falls down on one line or the other—everything in it, every event in it, every circumstance in it. They like to tell you the Bible's complicated; it's not. Find the beginning of the two lines in Genesis, and then the rest of the Bible and the rest of history in the Old Testament comes down on one line or the other. One line will be for God; the other line will be for the devil. The devil's line will always try to mess up God's line, and many times it does, but it's that simple. When you get into the New Testament, it's the same system. What you're seeing now in the book of Revelation, in the early part of our study of the sevens, you're beginning to see, just like in the Old Testament, God's line and the devil's line. Just as everything in the Old Testament falls down on those two lines, everything in the New Testament falls down on those two lines. It's just that simple.

As we come through this week after week, these are the characteristics. These are the things, not only historically—and there will be a lot of historical things that you need to know. Maybe some of you say, 'I don't care about that.' I'm sorry, but those of you that do care about it and you want to get yourself to the place where God can use you, you've got to get the historical things. There will be a lot of doctrinal things that point toward future events. If you want to be used of God and get the system down, you've got to learn that. Then there will be a lot of things that apply to your life and my life in our everyday living because you and I live in this period that we're studying in the book of Revelation. This is not some abstract concept. This is not like studying the Battle of David and Goliath. This is not like studying the flood in Genesis 6. Though it may be true and it may be real, it's abstract to me because I'm 3,500 years removed from it. But when I start talking about this, this is where you and I live. This is why you read the newspapers. This is why you are taught what you're taught in school. This is why you see what you see on television. This is why you are bombarded with all that you're bombarded. This is why we're having all the problems worldwide with the Muslims and the Middle East. It's all here. It's all here.

You remember last week we talked about the book of Daniel and how the book of Daniel and the book of Revelation go hand in hand. I showed you in Daniel 2 the image that Nebuchadnezzar had, which Daniel explained. We talked about how those portions of that body represented the Gentile nations. As you study your Bible and get a little historical with it, you're going to find that around 606 B.C., the nation of Israel had gone into deep apostasy. They rejected God; they rejected God's Word. Finally, God says, 'You know what? I'm going to turn you over to the Gentiles till My Son shows up. I'm going to give you a chance later to get it back, but right now it's all going to the Gentile.' So what God did is He had Sennacherib from Assyria and Nebuchadnezzar from Babylon, and they came down in two attacks and destroyed Jerusalem, carrying the Jews off. Israel, as we know it for the time being, is now under the rule of the Gentile. This is what Daniel's image is all about.

You're going to find that Satan now takes over the world. He takes over the world through these Gentile nations. In fact, during this period of time, in the book of Ezekiel, the book of Isaiah, the book of Jeremiah, and a number of places in the Bible, you will actually find where God speaks through the devil. He speaks to the devil and makes a proclamation to Satan through these Gentile kings. Sometimes He'll address the devil through the king of Assyria, that's Sennacherib. Sometimes He'll address the devil directly through the king of Babylon, that's Nebuchadnezzar. Sometimes He addresses him through Pharaoh, king of Egypt. You're going to find in the Old Testament the reason why God does that is because these are the nations whose leaders Satan is embodying. He is running the world and persecuting the Jews through those nations.

Right now, as we're reading this time period here in Revelation 2, in the church period called Smyrna, we're finding that the Roman Empire is in full bloom. The Roman Empire, if you remember our study last week, was the legs of Daniel's image. The thighs of brass were the Greek Empire. Around 100 B.C., the Roman Empire begins to defeat the Greeks and begins to build its kingdom, and by the time Christ shows up, the Roman Empire is running the world. We're now about 200 years past Christ's death, and the Roman Empire is at its zenith; it's at its height. It's now a world power under the Caesars and under the Herods. Rome dominates the known world. I'm not talking about America or South America; at that particular time, that was the unknown world. The known world was Europe, as we would know it today, Russia, the British Isles, Scotland, England, and those places. It was France, Germany. The known world was the Middle East—what we know of Pakistan today, and Saudi Arabia, and Egypt, and all of that. It was the Far East—Japan, Thailand. That was the known world. Though the Roman Empire never got over into the Far East because Genghis Khan and the great Shemites over there pretty much kept them out, Rome ran all of Europe and Asia Minor. In fact, we know from our Bible that when Christ shows up, Jerusalem is not a free city. The Jews are not a free people; they're under the iron heel of Rome. Coming down through Daniel's image, every time a new king took over, every time a new nation took world dominance, the Jew was right under their foot. They held him in bondage; they held him captive because the devil hates the nation of Israel, and he wants to destroy them, and now he's basically running the world.

IV. The Church at Smyrna: An Overview

We find that the devil, during this period of time, launches a two-pronged attack because now we're dealing with the church, not the nation of Israel. When the New Testament came into being, God focused His attention on the church. Last week, we saw the church at Ephesus, fully-purposed, and we saw immediately how the devil attacked that church. Now we see how the attack gets expanded.

Today, with that in mind, let's look at our second church. We want to turn to Revelation 2, and we'll pick it up here in verse 8. Here's what he says:

Revelation 2:8-11

And unto the angel of the church in Smyrna write; These things saith the first and the last, which was dead, and is alive;

I know thy works, and tribulation, and poverty, (but thou art rich) and I know the blasphemy of them which say they are Jews, and are not, but are the synagogue of Satan.

Fear none of those things which thou shalt suffer: behold, the devil shall cast some of you into prison, that ye may be tried; and ye shall have tribulation ten days: be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life.

He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches; He that overcometh shall not be hurt of the second death.

Father, we thank You and praise You today. Seven times in the first three chapters, Lord, we've heard that familiar phrase: 'If we've got an ear, let us hear what the Spirit is saying to the church.' Lord, we need to hear today. We need to understand because we are in some very confusing times, and God's people are very confused. I don't ever want confusion to come out of this pulpit. I want it to be the clear teachings and principles of the Word of God. I want it to be so direct and so clear that no matter where a person is this morning, no matter where they're at in their own personal relationship with God, that they be able to see very clearly today how easy all of this is. It may not be easy to live, but, Lord, it's so easy to understand. Lord, I pray today that You'll help us listen to what is said, to look between these great verses, to look underneath the surface, and to see and understand all that God has for us today, both historically, doctrinally, and truly, Lord, from our own daily struggles as we walk and fight this battle of life. Lord, we'll thank You and praise You in Jesus' name, for Your sake we ask it. Amen.

I guess if there's any church that gets my blood boiling, it's this church. Not because of what the church did, but I guess because of what God's people and their lackadaisical attitude do in relationship to this church today. The name 'Smyrna' means 'bitterness' or 'death.' This church picks up at the end of the Ephesian church period, around 200 A.D., and will bring us up to about 325 A.D. I told you early on that that's not exact; it kind of overlaps, but this is how it works down through history.

V. Smyrna's First Attack: Doctrinal Deviation

Look at Revelation 2:9. He says, "I know thy works, and tribulation, and poverty, (but thou art rich) and I know the blasphemy of them which say they are Jews, and are not, but are the synagogue of Satan." Three words in here you want to remember. This is how I memorize tough passages; I'm not smart enough to remember the whole verse, so I just remember a couple of words that are the key. The three key words are 'works,' 'tribulation,' and 'poverty.' Those are the three words that are characteristic of this church. Yet, this great verse is loaded with material. It's loaded with stuff, not only historically—remember now the time period is around 200 A.D. up to 325 A.D.—but it's loaded for you and for me because with this church, we see the deviation from the Word of God continue. With this church, as I told you last week, all the bad teachings, all the heresies, are just being pummeled on the church.

When he says, "the blasphemy of them which say they are Jews, and are not," you know what that teaching is? This is the first time you find the teaching being floated around in the churches where they start to teach the church has replaced the Jew. This, in modern-day theology, would

be called amillennialism or post-millennialism. The standard teaching of both is simply this: you don't need to know the details now; some of you already do, and you'll get it in time. But here's the teaching: The Bible teaches that in the Old Testament, the nation of Israel were God's chosen people. The Bible teaches in the New Testament that God has a church which is separate from the nation of Israel. One's in the Old Testament, one's in the New Testament. The Bible also teaches that the nation of Israel in the Old Testament turned their back on God. So God says to them, 'You know what? Okay, I'm going to teach you some lessons. I'm going to cut you loose, and I'm going to let these Gentile nations just beat you senseless for the next 3,000 years. I'm going to let them just whip you up one side and down the other till you learn your lesson.' Christ came back at the first coming of Christ and said, 'It's been 500 years now. Have you learned your lesson yet, Israel? I've been away from you for 500 years. Have you learned anything from that absence of God in your life yet?' You know what Israel says? They said the same thing a lot of God's people say: 'No, in fact, I'm doing just fine without You, God.' God says, 'Have at it.' God sent them His Son; what did they do with Him? They killed Him. Now God says, 'Okay, Israel, I'm going to turn My attention to the church, and I'm going to get Me some people that I'm going to fellowship with. I'm not done with you yet because there's coming a time when you're going to have to go through the Great Tribulation Period so that you can hear My voice.' That's why God has to put some of us through such tough times, because we just don't want to hear Him calling us. When God went to Israel at the first coming of Christ and said, 'Have you heard Me? Are you happy with being under bondage? I want to give you My King, My Son.' You know what they said? 'We'll have no king but Rome.' God says, 'Have at it. Go ahead, boys, have some fun. Go ahead, I'm going to go over here and I'm going to get Me a body of believers called the church, but I'm not done with Israel.' So right now, we're in the seven churches. We're in these seven churches we're studying, and one of these days the rapture is going to take place, and the church is going out. You know what God does then? God says, 'Hey, Israel, have you heard Me yet?' They go through the Tribulation Period; they hear Him in there, and then God restores them. Then, when we get out there, way out there someplace, you know what God's got? He's got the two people groups that His Bible is built around: the Jew in the Old Testament, the church in the New Testament. As every fairy tale and every story ever heard, they all live happily ever after. That's how it works.

Now, the teachings coming around say that's not true. Teaching is coming around now: 'Oh no, the Jews, they're Christ killers. The Jews are terrible people. God is all finished with the Jew. He's never going to...' And all those promises that God gave to the nation of Israel are no longer in effect; now they all go to the church. That's not true. But this teaching began to circulate during this time. That's why he says, "I know the blasphemy of them which say they are Jews, and are not." They're calling themselves Jews, but they're not Jews. You see, it comes down through here when it says, "but are of the synagogue of Satan." We're going to come back to that here in just a few minutes.

Remember last week I told you about the Nicolaitans. That was over in Revelation 2:6. Look at that. Look at Revelation 2:6. I want you to see, because if you don't see these things, you kind of miss something here. I want to show you how all this stuff happens. Look down there in Revelation 2:6. Does it not say "the deeds" (D-E-E-D-S) of the Nicolaitans? Is that what it says?

Now look over Revelation 2:15. A hundred years later—there was about a hundred years from Revelation 2:6 to Revelation 2:15. Now look what he says here. Does it not say "the doctrine of the Nicolaitans" there? Do you see what happened? In Revelation 2:6, it was a teaching; it was something that was being taught, but it wasn't official yet. By the time we get a hundred or so years down the line, it's not just a deed anymore; it's now a doctrine. It's become part of this church. That's how it happens. It starts out swirling around. It starts out with men leaving the Bible, wanting to believe something else and doing this and doing that. It starts out with little bad teachings that people are kind of passing around and writing letters and writing books. Somebody hears it and they say, 'Oh, I like that.' Men start to leave this book, and suddenly you wake up one morning, and it's now an official doctrine when you can't even find it in the Bible. That's how it happens.

Last week I talked to you about the church fathers, the early church leaders. These men are completely leading the way. You don't have to know all these guys' names; it's not important. If you really want to get into it at some point in your life, then yes, you're going to have to. I'm just giving you a point of reference. I just want to show you. During this time, the true church is pushed aside. Through Gnosticism, the doctrine, and the deeds of the Nicolaitans, we see these men being elevated to great spiritual leaders. We see them totally deviating from the Word of God now. We have guys like Cyprian around 200 A.D., guys like Clement, guys like Origen, Athanasius, men like Didymus, or Jerome, or Cyril of Jerusalem. They're all doing the same thing. They all have taken now—these guys are all kind of Christian philosophers. They're your modern-day Christian counselors. They want to mingle a little bit of Bible with a lot of pagan Greek mythology. They believe just like my old friend said, 'I believe the Bible contains truth. I just don't think it has all the truth.' That's where these boys are at.

It's a pretty prestigious thing to stand up to a bunch of people and take the living Word of the living God, and I, as a human man, stand up here and tell you God was wrong and I'm going to correct Him. You know how good that feels? Oh, that feels good when I go home. They get up there on TV every Sunday morning. They get up in the pulpits across this country, and they take the book that you're going to see here in a moment that God paid a great price for you to have. Because they're so stupid, and because they're so ignorant, because they're so asinine when it comes to God, and they're caught up in this Gnosticism of being all over the people. You know what the first sin in the Bible was? You don't think it was Adam and Eve, do you? The first sin in the Bible was somebody saying, 'Hey, I like being God.' The first sin in the Bible is in Genesis 3. It's somebody showing up saying to Eve, 'Eve, did God really know what He was talking about?' The first sin in the Bible was the devil showing up saying, "Yea, hath God said?" And then he said, 'But that's an unfortunate reading in a Greek that didn't read this way,' and then he changed it. That's the tactic. It feels good to get up in front of a crowd of people, and when you walk out of here, you think the best thing about the preacher is how smart he is. 'Wow, man, he rattles off those Greek idioms. I don't know what he's saying, but boy, it sounded impressive.' 'What did you get out of Sunday school this morning? My preacher showed me ten mistakes in my Bible. I just can't wait to go back and find some more.' Whatever happened to a church teaching the truths that are found in the Bible? Whatever happened to that idea? You think God really wants you to get up and show His mistakes? You think God is capable of making a mistake? When did

you get the idea that you had the right to get up in front of somebody and say, 'Now, unfortunately, that's not what it means. Let me tell you what it means.' You just put yourself in the driver's seat, pal. Now you're God. You know who teaches me about this book? I've had some great teachers in life. I've had two men in my life, probably maybe three men in my life, that really just revolutionized life, both the Word of God. But you know who really taught me? The Holy Spirit of God. There isn't one of those men, as much as I love them, as much as I think of them, as much as they've done for me, that I don't waste three seconds knowing that they're fallible and can make a mistake just like I can. That's not where I put it. I put it with the One who makes no mistakes.

All these guys took that. By the time you get into this time period here, you know what they're teaching? There are guys running around teaching now, 'If you want to get saved, you've got to get baptized.' Some are saying, 'Come on down here, you want to get saved? We'll baptize you in water. Now you're saved.' Then there's somebody saying, 'Well, now, wait a minute. In the Old Testament, that priest, he sprinkled people with water. Part of the sacrifice to the Jews, when they had to bring those offerings, the priest sprinkled clean water on those sacrifices.' Somebody says, 'Well, that's what we're to do. You want to be saved? Come here. Let me just throw some water on you. Now you're baptized. Now you're saved.' That's how it started. There were guys in this group running around saying, 'Jesus Christ was a great teacher and He was a great man, but He wasn't God.' There were men going around here, and they were saying, 'God's all done with the Jew.' There were some that said Christ was a great philosopher. There were some that even went to the extreme and said, 'He really didn't die. When He was in that cave, He just passed out.' Have you ever been in a cave? Have you ever been down in the ground? How cool it is? 'When they laid Him out on that cold rock and that coolness of the cave, He revived, but He didn't really die.' Oh, yeah. There are some saying He's really not coming back. All this is being taught at this time. It's just like it started out with the deeds, and it winds up being doctrine. The farther the two lines go, the true line stays right on the Bible, but you don't read about them. You've got to really do some digging to find those guys. In every church history, you'll get new two volumes. You'll get Schaff's eight volumes. You'll go out and get anything you want on church history. You know who you'll find put at the forefront? These guys. 'Well, that one guy in there, he thought God and the devil were going to patch things up someday, and all the unsaved people are going to get a second chance.' You open up Schaff's, he says that guy was one of the greatest theologians of his day. You open my book, you'll find out he was the most demon-possessed guy of his day. Life's choices, isn't it? But that's where it goes.

About this time, it just keeps getting worse. Somebody says, 'You know what? There are more than 66 books in your Bible.' And now suddenly 15 more books appear that were not in the Bible, now supposed to be in the Bible. All these guys are saying, 'Hey, what about these books?' And they start teaching from these books. You have the First Book of Esdras, which is a rewritten Greek version of Ezra, Chronicles, and Nehemiah. You have the Second Book of Esdras, which is the seven visions that Ezra had that are not found in your Bible. You have a book now called Tobit, who was a Jewish captive in Babylon, but he was blinded, and then he was miraculously healed. You have a book in here called Judith, a young Jewish widow who delivers her people from the Assyrians. You have a book called the 'Additions to the Book of

Esther.' Now you'll find that the Esther in your Bible is not correct; there are six missing passages, which we have now. Oh, I feel better about that. We find now the Wisdom of Solomon, not the one in your Bible, but a book praising Hebrew wisdom. We find now a book called the Wisdom of Sirach. We find a book called Baruch, which was the scribe that Jeremiah used. Now Baruch writes another work. It didn't seem to bother anybody that this work showed up in the first century, 406 years after Baruch died. That didn't bother anybody. It gives a new meaning to ghostwriting. You have the Letter of Jeremiah, another book Jeremiah wrote that God misplaced. You have the Song of the Three Hebrew Children, which is more information on Daniel 3. You have Susanna, a tale of a beautiful wife of a Babylonian Jew who refuses the advances of the Jewish elders. Yes, it was old Susanna. You have a book, 'Bel and the Dragon,' Daniel making fun of Baal. You have the Prayer of Manasseh, about the sinful king of Judah, son of Hezekiah. Then you have First and Second Maccabees, all about the Jewish revolt. Now everybody's saying these need to be added to your Bible. 'We don't have 66 anymore; we just added 15 more.' Oh, and then we have the Gospel of Judas. We have the Gospel of Mary. We have the Gospel of Nicodemus. We have the Gospel of Thomas. We have the Gospel of this, the Gospel of that. Man, there are more books floating around. Do you know how confusing that must have been for just normal, ordinary, saved men and women? You know how confusing it must have been? It was just as confusing as it is today, except for the true line that knew what they had was what they had. But that's the way it works.

Look back at Revelation 2:9 again. It says, "the synagogue of Satan." You see that? That's a great phrase. You know what he's showing you there? Synagogue is Jewish. This is not a synagogue; it's a church. Synagogue is Jewish. This is called the synagogue of Satan. You know what we have? This is where we start to get the teaching of somebody showing up, taking a little bit of the Old Testament and a little bit of the New Testament, and putting them together, giving you a church that bridges both. This is where the sprinkling is coming in; somebody's getting it out of the Old Testament in Leviticus. This is where this doctrine of the priest class over the laity is coming in, because in the Old Testament, the high priest was over the people. Jesus gives you, the Holy Spirit of God gives you, a great key here when He calls this particular time, this church, 'the synagogue of Satan.' These are the ones who say they are Jews and are not. They're taking the Old Testament teachings and New Testament teachings and mixing them together to damn your soul to hell. If you think it isn't going on today, my friend, let me tell you, the Gnostics didn't die out in the third century. The beginning of the blending of the Old Testament and the New Testament produced a church that has both elements. Paul dealt with this in the book of Galatians with the Judaizers. Why? Nobody reads the Bible anymore? Don't you know there was a group in Galatians that were trying to take the Galatians and put them back under the law and said, 'It's okay to believe in Christ, but you've got to have the Old Testament too'? And Paul said, 'You're heretics.' We've lost the Bible by this time. No, no, no. The people are buying into the Gnostics back then just like they're buying into them today. Nobody's pointing to book, chapter, verse anymore.

Now I'm going to tell you something, and this is another great principle. This should end for you, if you're paying attention at all, the silly idea that all churches are of God. I know that's tough for some people to grasp, right? But when you get your GPS up and working, and you find out

where you're at, and you look at these time periods, let me tell you something: you think the devil is just connected with drunks, prostitutes, drugs, homosexuals, lesbians, bars, booze, and in 'funky town' and the seven deadly sins? You think that's all he hangs out at? I told you already, the first time the devil showed up, he says, "Yea, hath God said?" Then he changed what God said. In Ephesians 6, when you're told about the spiritual battle that we have with the devil, Paul himself said:

Ephesians 6:12

For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places.

Now what does that mean? Spiritual wickedness in high places. Does that mean the devil just lives in skyscrapers? Does that mean if you want to stay away from the devil, don't go past the 13th floor? What does that mean? What is spiritual wickedness in high places? It's the devil being religious. I'll tell you, if you get anything out of this study, you find out that this idea that, 'Oh, this is because we're a church, this is because we talk about God leaving God. We're all going to the same place.' No, we're not. If history teaches you anything, it teaches you that the devil, one of his attacks, was to counterfeit the church and bring a church here that would be Satan's counterfeit to the real church of Jesus Christ.

Now look at Revelation 2:13. Look ahead a minute. Right now we're seeing how this church gets formed. We're seeing how this church starts out. We saw how it had the deeds, and then it turned into a doctrine. We saw now where it says that there are people who say they are Jews and are not, and they are the synagogue of Satan. Look ahead to the next church period. Look at this church here. This is what I'm talking about. Look at Revelation 2:13. Satan now has a seat in this church, and it's in the front row, and he dwells in this church. Do you see the importance of this 'sevens' series? Maybe you'll understand church history is such an absolutely complicated time period to study. You could spend six months on every little fringe thing, but God didn't want you to do that. God broke it down so you and I could grasp it. God broke it down so that you and I could see very clearly and plainly how this thing breaks down into seven periods of church history because God teaches us by sevens, and it has within it everything we need to find out our GPS location.

VI. Smyrna's Second Attack: Persecution and True Riches

That's the first attack. Let me talk to you about the second attack. Revelation 2:9 again: "I know thy works, and tribulation, and poverty, (but thou art rich)." There are our three words: 'works,' 'tribulation,' and 'poverty.' But then he says this in parenthesis: "but thou art rich." Here's another great concept. These things are loaded with everyday things that you and I have to think about and deal with every day. When I get out of Revelation 2:9, the first thing that strikes me is that God looks at things totally different than we do. We already looked at that in Isaiah 55:8 many, many times, where it says:

Isaiah 55:8-9

For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the LORD.

For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts.

There's a big difference in saying you're rich than being rich. If anything, this study shows you what the riches of God really are. That's another thing the churches have missed today. They think riches are big buildings, million-dollar bank accounts. I know a church in this city; if they don't make \$150,000 every week in their offering, they're in trouble. \$150,000 a week, they're in trouble. How would you like to live under that kind of pressure? How would you like, as a pastor, every night to know that if you went one month and didn't make your deal, you're going to lose everything you've got, and you've got to crank up \$150,000 at your church every week? Do you know why? They spend 15 minutes talking about the Bible and 40 minutes talking about money. Their life depends on it. They're going to be out of a job. No bucks, no Buck Rogers. They've got to have the bucks coming in. I'm just telling you, that's why things are the way they are.

In Revelation 3:17, we have a church that says it's rich, and God says, 'You're poor.' In Revelation 2:9, here's a church that looks poor, but God says, 'You're rich.' I love the contrast in the Bible. I stay up all night looking at contrasts. God looks at things totally different. I'm going to tell you something, and this is a true statement. I'm not saying this because I'm feeling sorry for myself today; I never feel sorry for myself, but I'm going to tell you something: anybody out there in the world of Christianity looks at this little crowd right in here, and they look at us as a poor little church. We don't have any steeple. We don't have an education center. We have one jungle gym. I remember one time a church spent \$85,000 for a sound system. I know a church paid a million dollars for a sound system. And you know what? The guy didn't sound any better than before he spent the money. But you know what it's like to go around and get into these little fellowship meetings with all these guys? I don't go to them. I've been there, but I don't go. I wouldn't waste my time. You know what it's all about? It's all about 'one-up-me.' 'Well, how's the church going, brother?' 'It's really going good! We just spent \$80,000 and \$85,000 and did our whole sound system. Boy, it sounds great!' Somebody said, 'Oh, really? We just spent a million five on ours.' 'Well, ours would have been a million five; we got a better deal than that.' That's how it works. You walk in there, and I mean, thick cushions for your rear end on the seats, plush carpet. This is a dance floor up here; they dance on this on Saturday night. You go back in that kitchen back there; there's beer. Well, you can't say that because most churches probably have those too. They dance on it; the band's right over here. I drove by here tonight, saw this thing packed. My wife and I came in to see what was going on, and the lights were flashing, and people were up here. It was going to town. They look at us and they say, 'Hey, that's a poor little church.' I want to tell you something. I'm speaking off the top of my head right now, and I may be wrong on this, but I'm not too wrong: this is probably the richest church in the city. The richest church in the city. 'What about your steeple? What about this? What about that?' We don't need any of that.

The true rich. I love God in His Word. God is such a great God in the way He puts things in that book. The Bible talks about the true riches. Does anybody know the verse in Luke where, if you

want to study the true riches, if you want to find out what the true riches are in the Bible, do you know where you have to go in Luke to get it? Does anybody know off the top of your head? Raise your hand if you do. If you don't, it's okay. Where do you go, John? Luke 16:11 is where the true riches are defined in your Bible. Whoa! 1611? If you don't open up the front of your Bible and it doesn't say 1611, you don't have the true riches. That's where they're found.

I was over at Shelly's the other night. We were having dinner over there, John Porter. Shelly was showing me this old book she bought. It was done in the 1850s and 1860s; it was a book on how to teach the Bible. I've taught you forever and ever that, and you heard me say it not too long ago, that the New Testament is revealed in the Old Testament. If you want to find out the New Testament, you have to go to the Old Testament; the Old Testament reveals the New Testament, and then the New Testament unlocks the Old Testament. I was reading that book, and she was showing me something in there. You know how Shelly gets; she gets so... I couldn't... I said, 'Shelly, I just got to read this myself because you're just... you're done.' She said, 'But you've got to see this, you've got to see this, you've got to see this!' And I said, 'Okay.' It was one of the greatest things I ever saw in my life, Shelly. The guy in this book—now this is when they used to believe the Bible and teach the Bible—the guy said in there, 'Now, if you're studying the Bible, the Old Testament will reveal the New Testament.' Great statement. Then you know what he said? 'How many letters in Old?' Three. 'How many letters in Testament?' Nine. 'How many books in the Old Testament?' Thirty-nine. 'Now, how many letters in New?' Three. 'How many letters in Testament?' That means there are 39 books in the New Testament; that won't work. No, no, no, no, no. The Old Testament reveals the New Testament. So, if there are 39 books in the Old Testament, three multiplied by nine is what? How many books in the New Testament? Twenty-seven. The New Testament is revealed in the Old Testament. I looked at that, and that guy wrote that in 1880 because he believed there was something about that book that's different. He believed that that book was what it was, and when it said 39 in the Old Testament and 39 in the New Testament, if the Bible, New Testament revealed, then you can't get it there. You've got to go back, and when you take three and nine and multiply them, you get 27. That's how many books in the New Testament. That's some Bible you've got. That's the true riches. Nobody knows that today.

Liz was telling me a story the other day. I hope I don't blow this. Is this his Christmas present? Can't do it. Can't tell the story, can I? Okay. Kyle, you're getting a Bible cover for your birthday for Christmas. She went into a bookstore to buy a Bible cover for him for Christmas. She asked the guy who ran the bookstore, 'Will this fit a 1611 Bible?' And the guy looks at her and says, 'What is that, the size?' True riches. You've got them.

I want to tell you something: every Christian should own four books. You need to have a lot of books, but if you only get it, you need four books.

- 1.) You need a King James 1611 Authorized Version. That goes without saying.
- 2.) You need a Strong's Concordance. Somebody says, 'Well, I got a Young's Concordance.' They'll be the same. Young's is for young Christians; Strong's is for strong Christians. That's how it works.
- 3.) The third book you need is **Dispensational Truth** by Clarence Larkin. Here it comes. I

want to give you one on New Year's Eve. What you get is you get a Bible, then you get a Strong's Concordance so you can run those references, and then you get *Dispensational Truth* that will break it all down and show you the flow.

4.) You need one more book to really understand the concept of the true riches. This is the true riches found in Luke 16:11. The Strong's Concordance will show you how to cross-reference the new treasure of the true riches. Then you need *Dispensational Truth* to show you how to really lay it out. You need one more book. Every Christian, I have these for. At some point in your life, you've got to have them because you'll never understand the concept, and you'll never see this second attack till you get this book. This book is called *Foxy's Book of Martyrs*.

Revelation 2:10 says:

Revelation 2:10

Fear none of those things which thou shalt suffer: behold, the devil shall cast some of you into prison, that ye may be tried; and ye shall have tribulation ten days: be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life.

Crown of life. See the second attack. The second attack on the church that everybody looked at and thought it was poor. God says, 'You're rich.' They didn't have anything monetarily. They didn't have any church building. They didn't have nothing but the clothes on their back. But the Bible says they're rich because of the Bible that they believed. He says, 'I'm going to give you a martyr's crown,' a crown of life. The 'tribulation ten days' there in Revelation 2:10 is a reference historically to the ten official Roman persecutions that took place under Diocletian's reign, about 295 to 305 A.D. This church goes into the Colosseum. This church is eaten by the lions. This church is severely persecuted. When the devil couldn't get them on one side and try to get them to corrupt themselves, when the true line wouldn't do it, you know what he did? He threw them into the Colosseum. Mothers and fathers watched their little eight, nine, ten-year-old kids run around that Colosseum screaming for mommy and daddy, being chased by wild bears, chased by wild lions, and mom and daddy were behind bars and couldn't do a thing. Read *Foxy's Book of Martyrs*. That's what's wrong with this country. That's what's wrong with God's people. They don't have any idea of the price that was paid for the true riches for you to sit here this morning and have your Bible. No idea whatsoever.

There was many a mother that ran with that baby as hard as she could, while the lion circled around her. When she couldn't run anymore, she just laid down on her baby to cover that baby while the lions took the pieces of flesh out of her back. Oh, yeah. And then you didn't want to get up to come to church this morning. You even thought about not being here. Oh, yeah. Next week, some of you will get a better deal, or some of you will be too tired, or it'll be bad weather. You just don't want to get out because you were out late last night. Oh, yeah. Unarmed men and boys thrown in the arena with gladiators. Men tied up, all four arms and legs, and pulled and quartered. The games sometimes went on for weeks. At nighttime, after the busy day, they would soak men and women—God's people—in pitch and tar for a day, and then tie them to poles and light them on fire to light the arenas as they watched the killing. All the joy, the spectacular of Rome. These, my friend, were the ones that were faithful unto death. Oh, yeah.

- You need four books:
- 1.) A book that is the true riches.
- 2.) A book that will show you how to cross-reference the true riches.
- 3.) A book that will lay out the dispensations and show you how it goes together.
- 4.) And then you need to know why it's the true riches.

I read an old English divine one time, almost 25 years ago, as he talked about this and penned this, and he said these words, and I've never forgotten them: 'They physically became the light in the night for Rome's pleasure that we might be the light of the world for God's pleasure.' I thought to myself, 'My God, what a statement! What a statement!' The only reason we have the Bible that we have this morning, and the only reason we have the heritage that we have this morning, is because somebody, in the face of severe persecution, somebody in the face of educational persecution, somebody in the face of dying and becoming a martyr unto death, looked in the face of death when it came to rejecting this book and said, 'I'll take the book and what comes with it.' Compare that with the church of Jesus Christ today.

VII. Call to Faithfulness and Future Outlook

Think about that the next time you have to even think about coming to Thursday night or not. Think about that the next time you have to think about, 'Oh, do I want to read my Bible today?' The church faithful unto death versus the church that makes God sick in Revelation 3. I'll tell you what I told you when we started this church period here: it really, really, really frosts me. The older I get, the less tolerant and less patience I have with the weak, whining Christians that just play and complain their life away. The less patience I have with the whiners of Christianity who have everything fully purposed to be what they want and everything that God wants them to be, but they choose to be weak; they choose to sell out to this old world. Anytime you want to take your problems, your little heartaches, your little whinings about life, compare it with any day in this church with what they had to face. This undisciplined, dysfunctional, lethargic, self-serving, self-centered, self-satisfying, 'woe is me' rabble called the church of Jesus Christ today has no clue, no concept of God's true riches and the price that was paid for you to have it this morning.

Isaiah 54:17. Oh, how many times, how many times have they stood there in the face of death? How many times, as they were burning? How many times a mother must have cried out as her little child was running, crying for 'Mommy, Daddy, help me, help me, help me,' and watched those wild beasts eat a little baby, eat a little child? How many times Isaiah 54:17 must have run through their mind, where it says:

Isaiah 54:17

No weapon that is formed against thee shall prosper; and every tongue that shall rise against thee in judgment thou shalt condemn. This is the heritage of the servants of the LORD, and their righteousness is of me, saith the LORD.

It's your heritage, paid for in blood.

Somebody says, 'Well, I like the NIV. I like the ASV. I like the RSV. Why do you like that old King James Bible?' I'll tell you why: for no other reason alone, if I didn't know anything about the manuscripts, if I didn't know anything about the history of manuscript heaven, if I didn't know anything about any of it, if I only knew this one single thing, it would be enough. I have a book that was bought and paid for with the blood of a hundred million Christians; they were willing to die for this one. These guys today, they want to get up in their \$500 suits and walk around and talk about what they know and how this and try to sway everybody. Let me tell you something: I have a book bought and paid for with blood, brother, and if you think I'd ever recommend a piece of godless, depraved trash like that, I'd cut my head off before I do it. There's a price tag of blood. Get yourself off of your own problems. Start looking at the heritage of the Lord and realize: I don't care what your little whiny problem is today. I don't care what your little struggle is today. I don't care. 'No weapon formed against thee will stand.' You know what your problem is? Our problem is, God's people today, we're so caught up in all of this. We see it as, 'Oh, woe is me.' It's all about us. It's all about you. It's all about being self-centered, self-satisfied, all about what we want. We've lost our position. He says, 'No weapon that is formed against thee shall prosper.' And they died by the hundreds, by the hundreds of thousands. We today live our lives, and we go on, and we're so caught up in our own little stupid stuff. We don't have time for God. We don't have time to give God anything. It's all about what we want. It's always been about what we want. It's always about what we want to do, and where I want to go, and what I want. 'I don't want to mess with this,' and 'Oh, somebody will laugh at me,' and 'Somebody will this,' and 'Oh, I can't do this,' or 'I can't do that.' 'You don't know my...' Yes, I know your problem. I certainly know your problem, and I know this: 'No weapon formed against thee will prosper.' You threw down the weapon and threw up your hands. That's your problem. You don't know any more about that Bible now than the day you got saved. That's your problem. You've been saved five, ten, fifteen, twenty years, and you still don't understand the process that got you here. God help you. Somebody will be here another 20 years if Jesus doesn't come, and you still won't get it because it's you, it's me, it's what I want. That's the most important thing. It's what I want, what I've got to have, what I think I need. That's why this church of Jesus Christ needs exactly what they had in this church period. The devil made a mistake. He doesn't make many, and he never makes the same one twice, but he doesn't know everything. He doesn't know everything that God's doing. There are a few things he missed in the Bible, and one of the things he missed was this: if you're going to wipe out the church and you want it to cease to exist, persecution is not the way to do it. All that does is separate the real ones from the phonies. That's all it does.

I wonder if we found ourselves back under a situation much like that. I wonder if we found ourselves today back under that kind of situation, how many would be here on Sunday morning? Oh, I know what you say. My God, some of you can't even get here three weeks in a row. I know what we all want to believe: 'Oh, I'd be there.' Well, you won't be there just because you say you're going to be there. If there's not something built into you that gets you to stand right now, you won't stand then. Persecution of the church will never stop the church, nor will it ever wipe it out, because it purges the church. It gets out the riff-raff. It gets out the ones that aren't real. It gets out the one that is playing the game. It gets out the ones that don't know why. I've had them say to me, 'I just don't know why I come to church. I just don't get anything out of it.' Then go someplace else! 'Well, I just... I just...' Hey, you've whined all of your lives. At some point in

your life, ladies and gentlemen, you must take a stand. These people were faithful unto death. I'm not talking about watching something on television where they all get killed, and then when they say 'cut,' they all get up and go to lunch together. I'm not talking about fake blood that when a guy gets shot, he pushes a little button and it squirts out. I'm talking about real-life men and women standing for Christ and faithful unto death. It'll always bring out the people that have the courage to stand for the Word of God, and I'm telling you, you better learn because you're going to spend an eternity with them. You better learn their names. You better learn who they are, and you better use whatever time you've got left, and by the grace of God, better do something to take it in the neck for Christ. You better get off of your large rear end and say, 'God, I'm going to do something for You.' You better get up in these last days and say, 'Lord, I'm going to take a stand. I'm going to learn. I'm going to get the true riches. I don't care what it takes. I want to be able to stand that if it comes, and it may come, and they have to stand, I want to know that I've got people behind me that because they did it, I can do it.' What a sad replication we are of the true church of Jesus Christ today, and even in this church, because this church has no excuse. We don't mince any words. I don't care if you come back next week or you don't; I want you to, but it's your choice. I'm not going to shade down my message or not say something because I may offend somebody. I've got to look at the face of those men and women back there that took a stand and died unto death. You think I'm going to cringe at your glare? You're going to think I'm going to be moved by your anger or your lackadaisical attitude? No, I will not. You play the coward if you want. You don't take the easy way out. I've got to spend an eternity with them, and more than that, I've got to look into the eyes of One that died for me, and all of us sacrificed for the book. If that wasn't great enough, terrible enough, the greatest sacrifice was Christ hanging on that cross for me, died for me, and wants me to do something for Him in my life. It's only going to come... I look at those two churches, and I told you before, these churches are like Christians. I look at that one church that says, 'I'm rich,' and God says, 'You're miserable.' I look at the other church where everybody looks at it and says, 'Boy, that's a poor little church,' and God says, 'No, they're rich.' It's God's people the same way. There are God's people today who think they have everything in the world, and they've got it made, and God looks at them and He says, 'You know what? You lackest one thing: the true riches.' And you've got the other ones out there that don't have two nickels to rub together, and they don't have anything, and they just love the book, and they've got it, and they'll never attain anything in this life, but brother, they just got it because they love it. Then you've got those that got it on both ends, and they say, 'Hey, you know what? This is more important to me than all the millions in the world.' Every once in a while, you run into somebody like that. I'm telling you now, next week you can do whatever you want to do. I would say this to you: I wouldn't miss the next two weeks because next week is going to take me two weeks to do it. I'm going to show you the greatest thing in history that you will ever see. I'm going to show you, when the Bible talks about back there in the Old Testament, how wise Satan is. I want to show you the greatest mind in the world outside of God's mind at work and the greatest trick he ever pulled off. We are coming right to the point where this thing is going to bridge. We're going to go back; we're going to pick up the true line. I'm going to show you what they've been doing, and then we're going to show you how the devil stepped right in here, and when he couldn't accomplish his plan by one, he changed gears, and he did accomplish

it by another. I'm going to show you why the church is in a screwed-up mess today. Every head bowed, every eye closed.