

Revelation 3

Sunday 1/14/2007

This morning, I invite you to turn to Revelation chapter 3. As you know, we have been coming through the breakdown of the systematic study in the Bible, how all the sevens are the key to the Word of God. Over 869 times in the Old Testament alone, God tells you that the number 7 is something special. The number 7 is the number of perfection. When God does something, He does it by sevens.

The first time you find this in the Bible is in Genesis 2, where in Genesis 1, God goes through the six days of creation. When it comes to the seventh day, He says, on the seventh day, God rested from all His work. That does not mean that God was tired and took a break. It means that God ceased because what He is about to tell you in Genesis 2:1 is very important. It is a great key in your Bible. He begins to tell you from that point on that God sanctified that seventh day and made it holy. Sanctification, or the word sanctify, means to set apart. God took the seventh day in Genesis 2 and told you that He had set apart the number 7. God does what He does through the rest of the Bible over 869 times to show you that there is something special about that 7. The number 7 is the key to the Scriptures.

We have been coming through this. We studied the seven baptisms, the seven resurrections, and the seven judgments. We talked about a whole number of series of sevens. Then I told you that we are going to take the book of Revelation. The book of Revelation is supposed to be the hardest book in the Bible. It is the easiest book in the Bible when you just follow the systems of sevens. We saw how the book of Revelation began to be broken down by the system of seven: the seven-year tribulation, seven angels, seven plagues, seven trumpets, and seven main characters or personages coming through the book of Revelation. The first thing that we are studying is the seven churches. I told you that these seven churches really begin to show you the seven periods of church history.

I. The Importance of Church History

I cannot impress upon you where you are today in your life and our church. Many of you have made the commitment in your own heart to the Lord that you want to take this year and really fine-tune what we have already been doing for the last three and a half years. We are asking God to raise up men and women who will take the Word of God seriously, who will begin to recognize that your salvation, your mate, your children, your family, your job—it was not given to you so that you can just go through life and do what you want to do. It was given to you that you might take those resources as tools that God could use you in your life.

I know life has its ups and downs, its bumps and its potholes. Greater is He that is in you than he that is in the world. There is nothing in this life that you cannot overcome with the Scriptures because you have a mission, and that mission is to find out what God wants you to do with your life and then do it. He saves you for a purpose. That is what we are about here in this church, and that is what we are investigating as we come through these seven periods of church history.

So far, we have been through four churches. Today, we are going to start the fifth church in our series of the seven churches. Remember that these seven periods of church history start around 60 A.D. with the close of the book of Acts and bring you up to the present time, showing you all the relevant material in history. We have been very careful, of course, we cannot do it all. If we did this the way that I would like to do it, and at some point we will have to do it, my goal this morning is not to teach you church history in its entirety, but to give you an outline to show you how the sevens work, because you cannot do that without giving you some history, as they go together. If I were to do this the way it needed to be done, we would probably spend two hours at a shot and probably take about 300 hours to get it done. But we do not have that time, and that is not our purpose. Our purpose is to show you how the sevens are the key to your Scriptures, and how the hardest book that man tells you is in your Bible, the book of Revelation, is really the easiest book in your Bible.

This is why church history is so important. As you grow into Scriptures and we get together and continue to work one-on-one and throughout the Thursday night Bible studies, you are going to find, and I am sure many of you are already seeing, how absolutely important church history is to your own personal life. Usually, we do not think that way. Most people, when they go to school, hate history because history is irrelevant to where you are or where you think you are. When I was growing up, history was not my favorite subject. Science was, because science seemed to deal with the now and what is in the future, what men are learning, and how it affects our lives: medical science, astronomy, physics, all the things that scientists portray that help us with our lives. History was irrelevant to me. What did I care that back around 2000 B.C., the Hittites or the Egyptians, or the upper, lower, middle, late dynasty? It did not make any difference to me. But now that I have become a Christian and now that I understand that the whole history of man is the Bible, I now understand the importance of it. Many of you are grasping that too. You will never really accomplish what God wants you to accomplish until you understand God's plan. You will never understand God's plan until you understand history.

I told you already, God's plan is in three phases. John writes the book of Revelation like this: he is taken to the second coming of Christ, taken into the future, and then he is told to write what has been, what is, and what shall be. You cannot understand God's program without understanding those three elements, and history is one of the key components. As you start to come through, you are going to find that it is so important, and God has detailed out the history of the church in a much even greater way.

I have found in my own life three ways that God really lays out church history. We are not going to get into these today, but they are great material for Thursday night, or if you want to come over one-on-one, I will help you put them out. We are already looking at the first one: God in the book of Revelation gives you seven distinct periods of church history. That is the first series of sevens you find in the book of Revelation. Church history is so important that God wanted you to look at it even closer than that. So you are going to find in the book of Mark, around Mark 13, where those seven periods of church history are broken down into four components. They are called the four watches. Those four watches, when you come through Mark, deal with starting at

six o'clock at night and running to six o'clock in the morning. It shows you the course of the church age from that aspect, and it is broken down into four watches.

When you get over to the book of Matthew 20, he breaks it down even farther. In Matthew 20, he shows you an hour system. He takes the 2,000 years or so of church history and breaks it down: somebody going to work at an hourly rate early in the morning, and then the sixth and the ninth hour, and then right on down the line. You are going to find that it is an incredible study. What he does is he starts with a broad concept. He does this within the Bible. The Bible by itself is sixty-six books. That is a very broad concept. But then he broke that concept down into smaller units called chapters. Then he broke those chapters down into smaller units called verses. That is the pattern God follows. He broke church history down from seven periods to four concepts of the watches to the hour system. That is always the way that God does it. If you want something on your hot list, you want to get in here and figure this stuff out, I will give you some stuff to ponder in your mind.

In Mark and in Matthew, they are both twelve-hour half-days of twelve hours. But Mark goes from the evening to the morning. Matthew goes from the morning to the evening. In Matthew, there is a kingdom of heaven. In Mark, there is no kingdom of heaven. Why is that? Why did he start from six to twelve in one story and then twelve to six in the other? Those are the things that when you see in your Bible, you want to ask yourself, why is that? That requires an investigative study of laying out the Scriptures. That is how you learn the Bible, by asking the things that you do not understand. That is why on Thursday night we have any question you want to ask about the Bible. That is why we have a policy in the church: I will spend an hour a week with anybody that wants to go through the Scriptures. Come over to my home. We will sit down, and you can ask me any question you want. Take any study you want, and I will help you put all that together. You will never learn the Bible just by coming on Sunday morning. You will never learn the Bible just by sitting down and trying to figure it out yourself. That is not the way God designed it. God designed a church to help you lay out the Scriptures, that you might find exactly in your life what God wants you to accomplish and what He wants you to do. That is the job of this church. We exist for no other reason. We are not here to build a big building. We are not here to get some kind of a great... We are here for you. The only important thing in this building are the people sitting here, because that is what God is going to use to further His kingdom.

Each one of these, from the book of Revelation to the book of Mark to the book of Matthew, lays out church history from a different perspective. One of the things that it does, and I think this is a great thing, is that because history is so far removed from us, we actually think that back in the time of Christ, their issues and their problems were different than our problems today. That is a normal thing to think because we are at a perspective with it. We think of the Egyptians back in Exodus 12, and we think of the life of Abraham in Genesis and Noah in Genesis 6. We think that they were up against a whole different set of issues than we are. One of the things that you learn from history, one of the great lessons you learn from history, is that human nature is always human nature, no matter where it is in history or the Bible. The same problems that you and I struggle with today are the same problems they struggled with back then. If you can get that out

of the Bible, you are well on your way to understanding that the key to solving your issues in life is understanding those issues back then.

The Bible does a lot of things. The Bible is the only book in the world that I know of that shows man how he can get into a mess, but then shows him how he can get out of the mess. That is the beauty of it. So you are going to see that as you study history, you are going to find that as Ecclesiastes 1 says, there is a repetitive nature to history. The old phrase is, if you have heard me say it a thousand times, and I will say it a thousand more times until Jesus comes back, the only thing men never learn from history is the fact that men never learn anything from history. The war in the Middle East right now is nothing more than us not learning the lessons of history. The problems in Vietnam were nothing more than us not learning the lessons of Korea. The problem in Korea was nothing more than us not learning the lessons of World War II. It just goes on right down the line. We refuse to learn from our past. That is why I tell you, I do not care what you have done in life. I do not care where you have been in life. I take you where you are, because that is what really counts. If you can learn from your mistakes instead of keeping on making them over and over again, if you will learn from your mistakes and profit from your mistakes, you are going to make it. We all make mistakes. There is nobody perfect. I am as far from perfect as you will ever find, and so are you. But the bottom line is this: if you learn from your mistakes and you focus on correcting those mistakes, you are going to find that that is how your life really develops with God. So we learn that from history. Solomon said, there is no new thing under the sun. We come up with new ideas and new things, and Solomon says, no, that has been around for a long time. The quicker you learn that, the quicker you really get yourself plugged into the Word of God. I do not know of anything that teaches you that better than the history of the church, because you see that mistakes keep being made over and over again.

II. The Church of Sardis: A Dead Church

Revelation 3 today, and we are going to start the next church here, and we will move right along. It says this in Revelation 3:1:

And unto the angel of the church in Sardis write; These things saith he that hath the seven Spirits of God, and the seven stars; I know thy works, that thou hast a name that thou livest, and art dead.

Be watchful, and strengthen the things which remain, that are ready to die: for I have not found thy works perfect before God.

Remember therefore how thou hast received and heard, and hold fast, and repent. If therefore thou shalt not watch, I will come on thee as a thief, and thou shalt not know what hour I will come upon thee.

Thou hast a few names even in Sardis which have not defiled their garments; and they shall walk with me in white: for they are worthy.

He that overcometh, the same shall be clothed in white raiment; and I will not blot out his name out of the book of life, but I will confess his name before my Father, and before his angels.

He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches.

Father, we thank You and praise You today. We ask You, Lord, to open up our hearts, give us the wisdom and the insight, Lord, to look into what we have today, to help us, Father, apply the Word of God to our own lives, and to really grow from it. We thank You for this church, Lord, and for its stand on the Word of God and its commitment to teaching people the Scriptures. We just love You, Lord, and thank You for all that You have done for us, all that You are going to do for us. Lord, we love You. Thank You for those that have come out today in spite of the weather, and may they have a blessing and leave today encouraged in Your Word, because that, Lord, is the purpose for our existence: to encourage and edify the body of Christ. Thank You, Lord, in Jesus' name, for His sake we ask it. Amen.

You have noticed how, as we have come through these churches, every one of the names of these churches has a meaning that is relative to history. The first church we saw was the Church of Ephesus, and I told you that the Church of Ephesus means "fully-purposed." We looked at the Church of Pergamos, and I showed you how that was a pivotal point in not only the history of the church but the history of the world. It was a time, under Constantine, that Christianity accepted the world, and that is called "much marriage."

Now, here we are in the one that is called Sardis. Sardis means "red ones." The time period approximately for Sardis in history would be around 1000 A.D. to about 1500 A.D. What we have now in Sardis, and you need to make a note of some things here if you are going to try to lay this thing out, is a couple of things. First of all, we saw how the Roman Catholic Church had been developing all through this. We saw how Constantine brought it all together. Now we understand that before Constantine, where Rome was pagan, it was killing the Christians and putting them into the Colosseums because they would not accept the gods of Rome. When Constantine consolidated the church and brought all of the pagans in, the church kind of split. The true Bible believers would not go along with all the heresy that was coming into the church. As I said last week, this information is found in any public library you want to go to. Much of it is found in the Roman Catholic encyclopedias. You do not have to be a sleuth to figure these things out. These things are common knowledge to anybody who has the desire to open up a book. They are not things that are hidden in history. The fact that people do not read anymore and people do not study anymore is why they do not understand a lot of these things.

What you have here now is that we see two lines beginning to develop. By the time we get into 500 to 1000 and 1500, we are right in the middle of the Dark Ages. We are right in the middle of the blackest point in man's history of the world. We find that not only are we in the darkest part of church history, but now we are finding where we are at the bloodiest part of church history. This is the rise of the highest point of the Roman Catholic Church butchering Christians because they would not become Catholic. We saw where pagan Rome did it because they would not accept the gods of Rome. Now we see it where the Roman Catholic Church does it because they will not become Catholic. Your book, Fox's Book of Martyrs, and that little book, Two Babylons by Woodrow, have a whole section in there on this. All of the references in the back of that book, there are probably 150 references to secular books that record the material that I am giving you today, plus much more. So now we see that this is the heart of the Dark Ages. This time period,

this church, "Red Ones," brings us up to the Renaissance period, which starts about 1500 and then breaks into the Reformation about 1520-1530.

III. The Rise of Islam and the Crusades

There are some events during this time that, and I know many of you are putting a historical timeline together as we are coming through this, and many of these things you need to get on a little line here. There are some events that are major events in history that fit into where we are at here in Revelation 3 that we need to look at and talk about to kind of fill in that timeline.

The first thing I want to talk to you about that happens during this period of time, or really it happens before this period but it really comes to fruition here, is the birth of Muhammad and the rise of Islam. Muhammad lives about 570 A.D. and dies about 632 A.D. During his lifetime, he is visited early on by a 33-year-old winged angel, who meets him along the road someplace and gives him the sacred writings, which are called the Quran. A little bit later on, that same winged angel meets Joseph Smith out there someplace and gives him the golden tablets to start the Mormon Church. It is a busy little winged angel. That is what takes place back in history. He comes along and meets this 33-year-old angel out here, and he says, "Here are some sacred writings," and those sacred writings have become the Quran. By 700 A.D., all over the Middle East, after his death, the Muslims, they split, they fracture a little bit, but to make a long story short, they are just all over the Middle East. They begin to impede the Roman Catholic Church's endeavors in the Middle East. Up to this point, the Roman Catholic Church was the only game in town, and she was running the world, no question about that. She was persecuting the true Bible believers, no question about that. But now the Muslim religion rises up through Muhammad, and by about 700 A.D., it spreads all over the Middle East.

I do not have to go into their mindset or what they are all about. If you want the Bible's take on it, with all the stuff that is going on in the Middle East and all the stuff that is going on back through history, go to Galatians 4:22-31, and that will put an end to the Muslims as far as God is concerned. There is a lot of confusion out there today because people think, or do not know, what the Bible says about it. I cannot speak for most churches, but for this church, the Scriptures themselves are the final authority of what we think. If we do not have that, then we are just like anybody else out there in the world. If you do not have an absolute standard that tells you what is right and what is wrong, then you are in trouble. When it comes to the Muslims today and the terrorism and all of the things, again, we think it is something new. There is nothing new under the sun. That thing runs back all the way back to Muhammad and even all the way back to Genesis. Muhammad takes his heritage from Abraham with Ishmael. He claimed to be the tenth in the genealogy from Israel back to Abraham. That is what this whole fight is about. The whole fight is about that Abraham had two boys, one of them by God, one of them in his flesh. The one by God was Isaac, and the one in his flesh was Ishmael. Those two boys never did get along, and those two boys today represent the nation of Israel (Isaac) and the Arabs, the Sunnis, and everybody else over there that runs it back to Ishmael. They did not get along in Genesis; they will not get along today. Men never learned that from history. There has never been a point where those two people got along. Never. And they never will. They both claim God as their

own; they both claim their father as Abraham because their father was Abraham in that sense. But if you want to get God's take on it, it is Galatians 4.

For it is written, that Abraham had two sons, the one by a bondmaid, the other by a freewoman.

But he who was of the bondwoman was born after the flesh; but he of the freewoman was by promise.

Which things are an allegory: for these are the two covenants; the one from the mount Sinai, which gendereth to bondage, which is Agar.

For this Agar is mount Sinai in Arabia, and answereth to Jerusalem which now is, and is in bondage with her children.

But Jerusalem which is above is free, which is the mother of us all.

For it is written, Rejoice, thou barren that bearest not; break forth and cry, thou that travailest not: for the desolate hath many more children than she which hath an husband.

Now we, brethren, as Isaac was, are the children of promise.

But as then he that was born after the flesh persecuted him that was born after the Spirit, even so it is now.

Nevertheless what saith the scripture? Cast out the bondwoman and her son: for the son of the bondwoman shall not be heir with the son of the freewoman.

So then, brethren, we are not children of the bondwoman, but of the free.

I do not give much for the new versions of the Bible. If you go over to Galatians 4, it will tell you in a very Elizabethan, stoic, perfect style of English, how God puts the bondservant or Ishmael out of the land. If I were writing the Bible, I would simply say that God took Ishmael and drop-kicked him through the goalposts of life and got him out of the land. That is the modern vernacular. That is what he does. He says, "Throw the bondwoman out, and her child out the window." That land belongs to Isaac, and that is the way it works.

IV. The Holy Roman Empire and Church Splits

Around 768 A.D., we see a man by the name of Charlemagne. This is a very key point in history. Charlemagne is sometimes called Charles the Great. He is king of the Franks in Germany. Here is another great point in history that you cannot miss. Around 799 A.D., Germany is Roman Catholic at this time, and Pope Leo is the Pope. You get two Popes, another Pope over here that says he ought to be Pope. Leo says, "No, I am the Pope." They are fighting back and forth. One Pope is telling the other Pope he is the Antichrist, and the other Pope is calling the other Pope the Antichrist. They really had a good church split going here. The only time in history I know that both Popes were telling the truth. They are both calling each other the Antichrist. The other Pope kicks Pope Leo off the throne, and he gets the throne.

Here is what Big Chuck does. That is Charles the Great. He takes an army down, defeats the other guy, takes Leo and puts him back in his high chair on his throne, puts his little bib back on, puts his bottle back in his mouth, and says, "You are now..." He puts him back on the throne. Pope Leo was so gratified by this, you know what he did? This is key in history. In 800 A.D. on Christmas Day, they had a coronation service. Pope Leo took a golden crown, and what he did on that day, he finished off what Constantine started in 325 A.D. when he brought the world and the church together. There are two great points in history that you have got to see concerning the Roman Catholic Church. In 325 A.D. with Constantine, it is where it gets its formulation and its foundation, and it grows from there. In 800 A.D., it now gets its authority to do what it does.

You know what happens in 800 A.D.? After Leo got kicked off his throne and Charlemagne put him back on, they had a big coronation service. In 800 A.D. on Christmas Day, Pope Leo has an audience with Charles the Great. Charles kneels down before the Pope. The Pope takes a golden crown, and here is what he said. This is the greatest point in history next to Constantine. He puts that crown on his head, and he says, "Charles Augustus, this day, crowned to be the ruler of Rome by God." That is very instructive. Big Chuck gets to be king, but the Pope gets to be God. The Pope had the crown, and he is crowning him, and he says, "Charles Augustus, this day you are crowned by God." This is a very important part in history. From this point on, the Roman Catholic Church, through the Popes, decides who is going to be the kings and queens all through Europe. When Charles the Great knelt down and accepted that, when Charles the Great knelt down and let him put that crown on his head, and let him decide he was going to be the king, from that point on, the Roman Catholic Church no longer becomes the Roman Catholic Church. It becomes the Holy Roman Empire. On that day, with one fell swoop, the Roman Catholic Church ceases to be a religion and becomes a nation.

Now she chooses. Do you ever wonder why there are no American Catholics? Do you ever meet anybody who says, "Oh, I am a Catholic," and you ask, "What kind of Catholic?" and they say, "I am a Roman Catholic." Have you ever noticed I have never met, in 35 years of ministry, an American Catholic? I have never met an Argentine Catholic. I have never met a European Catholic. I do not care where they live, South America, North America, Central America. I have been all over the place, China, Korea, Vietnam. Every place I have been, they are all Roman Catholic. There are no El Salvadorian Catholics. There are no Colombian Catholics. There are no Kansas City Catholics. There are no American Catholics, no South American Catholics, no European Catholics, no Russian Catholics. They are all Roman Catholics, no matter where they are. Do you know why? Right back to 800 A.D., Christmas Day. "Merry Christmas. Charles Augustus this day crowned by God." From that point on, it became the Roman Catholic Church.

I do not know what religion you all belong to today, but I can tell you this about every one of them. We may have some Methodists here today. We probably have a lot of Baptists. We probably have maybe some people that are Lutheran, I do not know, Episcopalian, Presbyterian. I can tell you one thing about everybody in here: if you are any other religion in the world than Roman Catholic, none of us have an ambassador at the United Nations. Wouldn't that be a joke, a Baptist preacher has an ambassador to the United Nations? That would be me. I would be assassinated in about a day, but that is okay too. Do you ever wonder about that? The Vatican

right now has an ambassador to the United Nations, and over in Vatican City in Rome, we have an American ambassador to them. How come we do not have one for the Baptists? If you are an Episcopalian, I would be mad at that. How come the Presbyterians do not have somebody? How in the world does one religion on the face of this planet have an ambassador to every country that has diplomatic immunity just like every other country does, and every country in the world sends an ambassador to Rome? Why is that? Do you not want to know? Did you ever wonder that? Maybe you never even knew that. Maybe after you do know it, you do not care. But I care. I want to know why those things are. You know why those things are? Right there, 800 A.D. "Charles Augustus this day crowned by God." From that point on, it is no longer called the Roman Catholic Church. It is called the Holy Roman Empire. An empire that runs the world. Now, up to this point, she just had control of it religiously. Now she has both pistols in both holsters. She is not going to be able to get rid of it. She has not only got it religiously, she has got it politically. All across Europe, in the heart of the Dark Ages, no queen, no king, no magistrate, no nation on this planet can choose to have a king or a queen unless the Pope says it is okay. That is world domination. If you think that is not going on again today around this world, I have some news for you. So we see that that is a pivotal point in history. That is right up there with Constantine. Those two things are absolutely a necessity to understand what is going on.

Then we get some little problems here. Around 869 A.D., we have the first church split in history. You need to get these down because by the time we are done, you are going to know where all the churches come from, and that is very important. I showed you last week how the biblical lines split down and how we got to be Baptist. Now you see the first real split in church history, and it is with the Roman Catholic Church. Again, we get two Popes getting sideways with one another, one on the west side and one on the east side, just like Chicago. Frank Nitti, who was a Roman Catholic, Bugs Moran, Roman Catholic, it always works. You get the east side gang, the west side gang. They had a problem, Constantinople on the east, Rome on the west, they had a problem, and they got sideways with each other. Again, they both communicated to each other, just going at it. This time nobody is around to put it back together. So what happens is we get a split. The church in Constantinople, which is the eastern branch, they bust out of the Roman Catholic Church, and they start their own church called the Greek Orthodox Church. That is where that starts, 869 A.D. It takes a while to get things going. Some guys give the time period around 1000, but it starts right in 869 A.D., and it blows up later. That starts your Greek Orthodox right there. Now we have got our first split. Now you know where they come from. As we come down through here, we are going to see how these things work out.

Another great event that takes place in history that everybody ought to know about is the start of the Crusades during this time period. The Crusades are probably the most misunderstood, over-glamorized, over-sensationalized campaign in all of history. They run from about 1095 to about 1270. Depending on how historians count them, they are sometimes counted as seven, some guys count them as eight. I have even seen guys count them up to nine, but that is immaterial. Here is the background of the Crusades. Remember, here is what you have, and I will tell you something. I do not have time to get into this this morning. This is one of the greatest studies in the Bible, in history. The concept of the Crusades and what God is doing behind the scenes to keep the Roman Catholic Church out of the Middle East. It is one of the greatest political,

religious studies that you are ever going to take in the Scriptures to see how this thing works and ties the whole thing together right into Revelation chapter where we are at right now. It is incredible what is taking place.

Up to this point, the Roman Catholic Church pretty much had free reign in the Middle East, and they were going down in Jerusalem, and basically they were plundering Jerusalem. I remember telling you this story: in 325 A.D., after Constantine got his phony conversion, his mother, Helen, went down to Jerusalem, and she found the exact... She is rummaging through a garage sale someplace in the inner city there, and she finds, "Wow, what a deal! The exact cross that Christ was crucified on." She calls Constantine up on the phone and says, "Hey, look what I found!" This is in history books. This is in religious books. It is in any book and library you want to get your hands on. She calls him up on the phone and says, "Hey, look what I found! You are not going to believe this!" She is ecstatic. Constantine runs right back down to Jerusalem, and what he does is he builds a church on the spot called today the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, and it is built right on the spot where they found that cross, and she says this is the spot that he was crucified on. It did not make any difference that the Bible says that was not the spot. The Bible says in the book of Hebrews it was outside on Calvary, but "Oh, don't bring the Bible into this. Don't confuse the issue with facts here."

So what happens after that is all the Christians, when I say Christians, Catholics, start going to Jerusalem. Jerusalem is now the holy city. The Roman Catholic Church says it is their city. The Roman Catholic Church says, "The Jews killed Christ. They are Christ killers, so God is finished with the Jew." Augustine wrote this in his book called City of God, and he says in that city that Jerusalem has now become the official occupation of Rome, and that is their city. They have taken it over. So they are going down there, and they are taking everything. They are taking everything. Anything they find that has anything to do with what they think is God. They have got it all, and you can go to Europe today, and the cathedrals over there, and they all have museums that have this stuff in it. I saw when I was in Europe, I saw the lance of somebody, and it was the spear that was thrown in Christ's side. Right there, in a big glass cage. I saw the original crown of thorns. I did. It goes from the extremes of the absurd. I saw a bottle of breast milk that came out of Mary's breast. I am just telling you. I told you the story, and I still laugh about it. It is worth telling. We were in Reims, Germany, went into a cathedral, and the guy was taking us around showing us the things, and there was all kinds of stuff there. I saw the finger of James. That is the finger that he, or Thomas, the finger of Thomas. That is the one he put in Christ's side. They worship these relics. There were all kinds of bones around, and they had a... I asked, there was a skull there, and I asked the guy, "Whose skull is that?" He says, "Oh, that is the skull of John the Baptist. He had his head cut off." I said, "Oh, yeah, I remember that story." Then we are over in Strasbourg, France. We are going through another one. The guy says, "There is another skull." I says, "Whose skull is that?" Because I am thinking, "Well, that was John the Baptist over here. Maybe this is somebody really important. I want to get this down." He said, "Oh, that is the head of John the Baptist." "Yeah, it was cut off." What I am about to tell you is absolutely true. God strike me dead if this is not true. I said to him, "We were over in Germany here a couple weeks ago, and we went through there, and I am still stupid. I am thinking they are shipping these things around like they do down at Union Station. They are on tour over here, and

now they are moving around over here." I am dumb. I say, "I am stupid." That is what I am after this thing. I ask him, "Well, we were in Germany two weeks ago, and we went through that over there in Reims, and he said that that was the head of John the Baptist." God is my witness. He put his hand on his chin like this and looked up and thought to himself, and he says, "Oh, I know. This one is when he was a child."

I do not know what to tell you. But this is what goes on. They are going down through there. When Constantine's mother found the cross down there in 326 A.D., brought that cross back, everybody got on the bandwagon. We are now 1200 A.D., almost 900 years past that thing. When you go to... By this time, there are enough pieces of the cross over there in Europe to build Fort Apache. They are everywhere. What they are doing is the Catholics are going down into Jerusalem and taking everything. They are building shrines. They are building churches. The Muslims are down there. Here is where the hot air meets the cold air. The Muslims are down here, and they say Jerusalem is one of their cities. They do not appreciate being ripped off by the Catholics. They are saying to themselves, "What are you doing?" The Catholics are taking it out in tractor-trailer loads. They have the spear in Christ's side. They have the cup that Christ drank from. If you had a... If he drank out of all the cups in Europe today, I am telling you, they are everywhere. They have the fingernails of Jesus. They have the bones of Stephen. They have this. They have that. They are just hauling it out. The Muslims are not liking it. They start roughing them up a little bit. Beat them around, kicking them around. In some cases, killing them. They are not happy about it. So the people are coming back, and they are saying, "We cannot go to Jerusalem to worship and find all the relics to pray for. Those mean guys down there are just beating us up. They are kicking us out. They are throwing us out." "I had the greatest relic you ever saw in your life. I did. I had... And they took it right out from me and sent me on the way, and they beat me up."

Pope Urban is in this time, 1095 A.D. Pope Urban says, "We are going to see about that." So he gets everybody together, has a meeting called the Council of Clermont. He gets everybody together, and he says, "This land belongs to us. It does not belong to them. God has told me..." You hear this on television all the time. "God has told me. All the time. I have a dream. God has told me that if we raise up an army, they will go down there, and God will split the Washington just like He did in the Red Sea. He will give us great victories." He took all the Old Testament passages, and they were down there, and they were all standing down there, and they started shouting, "God wills it! God wills it! God wills it! God wills it!" Over in Jerusalem, the Muslims were having their own pep rally. They were saying, "It is the will of Allah! We have it!" So we are about to see in history the will of Allah run smack into "God wills it."

I have to tell you, if you are going to be on a side, if you were a Roman Catholic and you got killed, you just got to go to heaven. If you were a Muslim and got killed, you got 18 virgins that got to go to heaven. Needless to say, morale was high with the other guys. Guys, take your choice. You want to die and go to hell with me, a Roman Catholic, or this idea of... 18 virgins for all of eternity with a drunken orgy going on? Sign me up. Do you not know that would give you a little more fire and fervor in battle? If you are standing down there facing all those Muslims coming at you, and they are standing down there and you are saying to each other, "Well, it looks

like it is going to be a tough one. Yeah, we will have to stand and fight. Yeah, but bless the Lord. When we die, Pope said we got an 85% chance of going to heaven." The Muslims are coming down there and they are saying, "Come on, I hope I get it today! Wow! 18 virgins and all the booze I can drink, I am on my way." Who is going to win that battle? They smacked right in the middle.

The Crusades were nothing more than the Roman Catholic Church wanting to take control of the Middle East because she believed that she was predestined to have everything that Israel had, and she wanted that land. God raised up the Muslims to say, "You are not getting that land." They go back and forth. I am telling you, the Romans... Do you know why they hate us today? Do you know why the Muslims hate us today? Do you know why they want to kill you and me today? You have to learn history. Remember when we started the Gulf War this time around, President Bush made the biggest boo-boo in the world, and the whole press was on it. Do you know what he said? He called it a crusade. Wrong thing to do. That was not politically correct. But it is a crusade. Do you know why they want to kill you? Because around the second or third or fourth Crusade, I do not remember where it was. You have been to one, you have been to them all. One of those ones, do you know what it did? When they finally got Jerusalem temporarily, those Roman Catholics went in there and they butchered every woman, every child. Those Roman Catholic soldiers took those babies and threw them up and caught them on spears, caught them on swords, threw them off the walls. They butchered them. When the Muslims took Jerusalem back under Saladin, they treated them with respect. The Muslims have never forgotten what the Roman Catholic did in the second or third Crusade. Never forgot it.

What they did was today, they look at... They look in America, they do not see Baptists, Episcopalians, Presbyterians, and Catholics. They just see Christians. They do not make the determination between the denominations. So they hate us because of what we did in the Crusades, and they hate Israel over the land issue. So when they finally cut your throat, when they finally impale you on a stick someplace, when they finally come into your house, if Jesus does not come, and touch off a dirty bomb someplace in this city or some other city, or when they run some more planes into the towers, do not take it personal. Go back to the Bible and history and understand it is because of the Crusades. It is still today "God wills it" versus "the will of Allah." The reason why we will not win over there, and I am not saying the war is wrong, I am just saying when you go fight a war, you win it. You do not go in and tap dance. If they have a company, you take a brigade. If they have a brigade, you take a division. If they have a division, you take a corps. If they have a corps, you take five corps. If they have five corps, you take ten corps. You take five times as much as you need to do the job, but you go in and do it. We get over there fighting in that Middle East stuff, and they blow our boys up, shoot our boys, maim our boys, and run into a mosque, and it is like, "Time out." But they would not hesitate blowing up this church or any other church. They would never blow this one up. But they would go to some big church where they get 20,000, 30,000 people and blow it up. It is okay for them. It is not okay for us. You do not win a war that way. You win a war by being equal power, equal force, or greater force than the opposing force. That is how you win a war. No quarter asked, no quarter given. No time outs. "You fire rockets at us, we will use harsh language with you." That is not how you win a war. But we will not fight that way. Do you know why? Because politics

and religion, we do not recognize this for what it is, because we do not understand our history, and we are missing and making the same mistakes in history. This is a religious war. It is a religious war because they hate us because of what the Catholics did, and they hate the whole world because of Jews and how their relationship is with God. The devil is into details, and that is where this whole thing is going, and that is why we are going to get raptured out, and then the biggest battle is going to take place, and it is going to be between... God is going to wipe them all out, and He is going to set it up the way He wants to set it up. If you do not see that, then you are in trouble. The Crusades are nothing more than the Roman Catholic Church wanting to make Jerusalem a Roman Catholic Church state. That is why every Roman Catholic teaches in the amillennial or the postmillennial position that they are going to conquer the world with Christianity.

Let me tell you how this thing started. The only thing men never learn from history is men never learn from history. Here is how this whole thing started. Around 1090-1095 A.D., a little 12-year-old shepherd boy had a vision. He was out there tending the sheep, and he has a vision that all the world is going to become Roman Catholic. He takes that to Pope Urban, or it makes its way to Pope Urban. Pope Urban takes this little 12-year-old boy, and he makes it a great spectacle that God has spoken to this little child, and they are going to open up the greatest crusade they ever had. In time, this led to the Children's Crusade, which was really the most tragic in history. Over 250,000 little kids, like yours, 12, 15, 18, 19, like your kids, were told by the Pope, their parents were told by the Pope, that God had decreed that the children go and defeat the Muslim army. The Muslim army was something else. So all the Roman Catholic parents sent their little kids on the promise of the Pope, that God would take the weaker things to confound the wise, and would take the little things, the little children, and defeat the David and Goliath syndrome.

250,000 to 300,000 little kids, all banded together, and went to fight the Muslims. Out of 250,000 to 300,000, only 2,000 ever returned. The rest of them were slaughtered, sold into slavery. 100,000 of them made passage on Persian ships to get them to the Holy Land, and they did not even take them there; they took them and sold them straight into slavery. The rest of them were butchered by the Muslims, put into slavery by the Muslims, and only 2,000 or so kids ever made their way back. Here is how it works. When all the parents got mad at the Pope because the youth activity failed. Do you not know that would make you upset? "I sent my kid out there to do this thing, you said all these were going to happen, none of that happened?" The youth activity flopped. "What is going on here?" Do you know what the Pope said? He blamed it on the Jews and the Waldensians. The Waldensians were the Bible-believing group that we come from. He blamed it on the Jews and the Waldensians that they had cast a spell and showed the defeat. Do you know what he did then? He raised two armies to wipe out Jews and Waldensians. That is how it works.

That little boy down there, three little girls saw that vision. In 1914, in a place called Fatima, Portugal, three little girls saw another vision, probably the same vision. That same vision talked about how the Roman Catholic Church this time was not going to defeat the Muslims, was going to defeat communism. This was in 1917, right at the beginning of the Russian Revolution, if you know anything about history in Europe. What happened at this time is that it makes its way down

to the Pope, and the Pope gets the idea that the Roman Catholic Church, in a vision from God, and this time the Virgin Mary herself showed up to these little girls in Fatima, Portugal. Have you ever heard of the Roman Catholic Church, Our Lady of Fatima? That is where it comes from. When that message got back to the Pope, do you know what the Pope did? Remember now, he is the Holy Roman Empire. He is still running all the kings in Europe. France is Catholic, Germany is Catholic and Lutheran, which is so close together, he is running everything in Europe. Do you know what he does? He orchestrates that, pulls the leaders together, he sends Cardinal Spellman over to America, and for the next 50 years, we fight World War I, World War II, Korea, and Vietnam, and we are in the Middle East right now because of what took place in Fatima, Portugal in 1917, and we never learned from history what took place to start the Crusades. It is the same system. The same absolute system. The last little girl just died about nine or ten years ago. Pope Pius held these secrets that they had given him. A lot of people wonder why the German business party put Hitler in power in 1933. The Catholic businessmen of Germany, Adolf Hitler was a Roman Catholic. Every man he had in his upper echelon was Roman Catholic. Do you know why? Do you know why Pope Pius put him in and backed him all the way? Do you realize he was ravaging this world and killing the Jews? The Pope never came out in one statement about him. Do you realize at the end of World War II, with the ODESSA files and Operation Spider, all the SS leaders were smuggled into Roman Catholic South America through a Vatican in Germany with forged papers dressed like Popes? It was in the Kansas City Star two years ago. I do not know what you read. Do you know why that happens? Because they had a deal. Good Roman Catholic armies are all the same. When you read back in history with Charlemagne and all that stuff, there is no difference in what was going on in 1933 to 1945. It was just another Roman Catholic army raised up to not only wipe out the Jews, but to make sure that communism never dominated the world because those three little girls back there in Fatima, Portugal, said that communism was going to come to an end and Roman Catholicism was going to be the world religion. That is why. The only thing men never learned from history is they never learned anything from history. The Crusades under Pope Urban, he gets up there and he says, "We are going to get that land back. I have an urban renewal program. We are going to get this thing going, and we are going to get the land back." It does not happen. After seven or eight times in about 200 years, it is a tragedy.

V. The Inquisition and Moral Decay

The next thing that shows up and takes place is the rise of the Inquisition. The Inquisition is the official persecution of Bible believers, commonly called heretics by Rome, through the nations and the kings and the queens set up by the Holy Roman Empire. Once Charlemagne made that deal with him and he became crowned by God and the Pope got to be God, he just got to be king, he now has the power, the Pope does, to raise up armies in East Roman Catholic nations to wipe out anybody that gets in his way. It is the Jews and it is the Bible believers. But here again, the only thing men never learned from history is men never learned from history. The Old Testament was Egypt, Babylon, Assyria, the Hittites, the Canaanites, the Hivites, the Jebusites, the Klingons, and all the rest of them. The New Testament is Spain, Germany, France, England, it is all the rest of them. Nothing changes.

The next thing that you need to understand that takes place during this time is the great moral decay of the Roman Catholic Church. Get a couple copies of any Roman Catholic encyclopedia on the Popes, written by the Roman Catholic historians. Get a book called Roman Catholicism by a man by the name of Bottinger, which is the textbook on Roman Catholicism, has been for the last 60 years. You are going to find where the Pope's offices are many times bought and sold. Many times a Pope comes into power who will be murdered by some other Pope to take over his. It is just unbelievable what is going on.

Ralph Woodrow in his book on the Babylon Mystery Religion tells the story of the female Pope, Pope Joan. Pope Joan was a woman disguised as a Pope in the 1500s right before Martin Luther came into power. In fact, Martin Luther saw a statue to her behind the Vatican, and it was one of the things that God used to disillusion him about the Roman Catholic Church. Here was a woman that was a bona fide woman who had become a Pope. She dressed like a man. She was not found out to be a woman until one time in a procession down through the Vatican Square. She collapsed and gave birth to a baby. When questioned upon it today, do you know what the Roman Catholic Church says? And I have done this. I have talked to historians. Do you know what happens? In 1595, Clement VII simply took Pope Joan and transformed her into Pope Zacchaeus. Made her a man and that solved their problem. That is the way it works. Do whatever you want to do.

Those events are the events that are going to lead us up to our next period when we get into the greatest period in church history, which has to do with the Reformation and the Philadelphia Church Age. The Crusades, and we will talk about this next week, were an absolute disaster for the Roman Catholic Church. We will talk about why. It was a key part of it. The moral corruption that is going on was a key part of it. The rise of the Inquisition in Spain and in Germany and in Europe and in England was part of it. All of these things God is bringing up to a point where this thing is going to crack wide open.

VI. The Dead Church and the Wise vs. Foolish

Now look at Revelation 3:1 and let us look at a few things here. Look at verse 1. The first thing he says is this:

And unto the angel of the church in Sardis write; These things saith he that hath the seven Spirits of God, and the seven stars; I know thy works, that thou hast a name that thou livest, and art dead.

Do you see that thing? It has a name and it is alive, but it is dead. It is a dead church. The name that it got, it got when Charlemagne and the Pope joined themselves together, and the name now is called the Holy Roman Empire. I am going to give you a little key here, and this will put this on your hot list if you want to get it. A couple of weeks ago on a Thursday night, somebody asked a question in John 16. I forget what it was, but then Marian came back with a question because it talked about in John 16:25 where Christ was talking about, and we saw the context was the second coming of Christ. Then Marian brought up the thing that it talked about. God was writing about some things in Proverbs. He asked a question about how Proverbs fit into all this. I

told you that night that the book of Proverbs is one of the greatest books in the Bible. He was telling you right there, showing you the book of Proverbs is a key to understanding the tribulation period and the second coming of Christ.

Here is why it is. Turn over to Proverbs 2. The Bible says, "Thou hast a name that thou livest but you are dead." I told you last week when we studied the Pergamos Church period, or the one after that, I talked about Jezebel and Ahab. The man and the woman. Ahab represents the Antichrist. Jezebel represents the religion. As the Roman Catholic Church formed in the church period of Thyatira, the one we looked at last time, we see Jezebel, who has taken place back in 1 Kings 16, suddenly showing up right in 500 A.D. in church history. I made the parallel how that is a picture of the Roman Catholic system under the Old Testament Baal worship.

Now watch this. In the book of Proverbs 2. You should know this about your Bible. If you do not, I am going to educate you a little bit farther along today. Your Bible in its most basic common form is about two kinds of people. We know them as what? Saved and lost. That is very easy. In the Bible, they are called wise and foolish. The wise man finds the way of God. The foolish man goes around saying, "The fool has said in his heart that there is no God." It is that simple. There is a wise man and a foolish man. There is a saved man. There is a lost man. There is a man who finds the light. There is a man who stays in darkness. That is what we are talking about all the way down through the Bible. In the book of Proverbs, as in the book of Psalms, as in the book of Ecclesiastes, you are going to find that those two men are personified. You are going to find that those two men are personified in the sense of the nation of Israel. In Matthew 25, when it talks about the second coming of Christ, it says there are 10 virgins. Five are wise. Five are foolish. All through the Old Testament, when it is dealing with the nation of Israel, you are going to find that the nation of Israel is likened in a historical sense to a wise man, somebody who follows God, and a foolish man, somebody who does not.

When you read the book of Proverbs, who wrote Proverbs? Proverbs are written by Solomon. Solomon is the wisest man that ever lived. When you read through the book of Proverbs, the first seven chapters, it all says, "My son, my son, my son, my son." Do you know who Solomon is writing that to? He is writing it to his own boy, Rehoboam. He is saying to Rehoboam, who takes over the throne after Solomon dies, "Rehoboam, learn wisdom. Get understanding. Learn what the Bible says. Follow God. If you do not, Rehoboam, you are going to be a fool." Do you know what Rehoboam wound up being? He wound up being a fool. He forsook God, forsook God's principles, one of the worst kings Israel ever had. So when you come through the book of Proverbs, you understand that historically he is talking about his own son. Inspirationally, he is talking about you and me. When you get into the Word of God, you are a wise man. If you do not get into the Word of God, you are going to be a foolish woman. It is that simple. The Bible says in Proverbs, "He that hangs out with fools is a what?" And he that hangs out with a wise man is like Bob Alexander. I do not want to tell you. Just kidding. But that is what you get. It is that simple. It is not hard. You hang out with an idiot, you are going to be an idiot. You hang out with somebody that has some sense, you will probably have some sense.

In the book of Proverbs, you find two warnings. I want to read it to you in Proverbs 2. Because it says, "Thou shalt have a name." That name is called the Holy Roman Empire. In Revelation 17

and 18, that name is called Babylon Mystery Religion, the mother of harlots. That is a direct reference to the Roman Catholic Church, Revelation 17 and 18. That is why the Roman Catholic Church will not accept the Book of Revelation as literal. If they accept that book as literal, you would not find a priest, a cardinal, a bishop, a Catholic teacher, or a seminary student anywhere in this world who will accept Revelation as a literal book. Do you know why? Because whatever they do, wherever they go, when they come to Revelation 17 and 18, they do have some problems. So they make it spiritual. They will apply it to them. They will make it apply allegorically, figuratively. That is what they do.

Now, in Proverbs 2, I want to show you something. Look at Proverbs 2:10:

When wisdom entereth into thine heart, and knowledge is pleasant unto thy soul;

Discretion shall preserve thee, understanding shall keep thee:

To deliver thee from the way of the evil man, from the man that speaketh froward things;

Who leave the paths of uprightness, to walk in the ways of darkness;

Who rejoice to do evil, and delight in the frowardness of the wicked;

Whose ways are crooked, and they froward in their paths:

To deliver thee from the strange woman, even from the stranger which flattereth with her words;

Which forsaketh the guide of her youth, and forgetteth the covenant of her God.

For her house inclineth unto death, and her paths unto the dead.

None that go unto her return again, neither take they hold of the paths of life.

That thou mayest walk in the way of good men, and keep the paths of the righteous:

For the upright shall dwell in the land, and the perfect shall remain in it.

But the wicked shall be cut off from the earth, and the transgressors shall be rooted out of it.

This is showing you right here that this evil man and this strange, whorish woman is a picture of exactly what you had when we talked about Ahab and Jezebel. Jezebel will be the whorish woman. Ahab will be the strange man. One represents in your life and my life any wicked man. If you are a Christian, the Bible says, "Come out from among them, and be separate, saith the Lord." One of the biggest mistakes that Christians make is once they get saved, they think they can still hang out with their old buddies. Still go to places, still do the old things, and God will still... it will be okay. No, it will not. They will have influence over you, over God, it is just a matter of time. The fact that you think to yourself you are stronger than the other guy is your first mistake. When you hang out with idiots, you turn into an idiot. I have never seen a wise idiot. When you hang out with a wrong crowd, you become the wrong crowd. It is called identification of who you are hanging out with. When you hang out with a wise person, somebody that has some character, somebody that has some quality, that is why I encourage you young men and women when you get saved. If we ever hang out with the ones that love God, hang out with the

ones that love the Bible, hang out with the ones that do not go there. If you have to make a break with your friends, I do not know what to tell you. Because you thinking that you can walk down life's road with a hold in God's hand on one side and the world's hand on the other, you have deceived yourself. It is one or the other. You cannot... you can try to rationalize. I have heard rationalization and justification for everything in life. At the end of the day, it still comes back to what the Bible says. When you get saved, you lose your mind. When God brings you out of that mess and saves you from it, do not go back. Get some new friends. Get people who love God, love righteousness, love the Word of God. If you are hurting, get around, let people love you. Let them help you. Let them be there for you. That is what we are here for. But the bottom line is, you have to let it go. Because you cannot, "How can two walk together, except they be agreed?" I heard somebody last night when I was walking around in their devotion, use that verse. "How can two walk together, except they be agreed?" The Bible said, "The light shined in the darkness and the darkness comprehended it not." You cannot put them together. It is foolish to think that you can. The old verse, I love it. "Why call ye me Lord, Lord, and do not the things that I say?" "You do greatly err, not knowing the Scriptures." The bottom line is, you cannot put light and darkness together. The more you try to justify and rationalize it, it just will not work. I am telling you, out of the darkness, into the light. It is just that simple. That is what he is trying to get across. For Israel, he is telling them, "Look, stay away from the evil man and stay away from the whorish woman." That is why you find them right in the church age. I told you last week, the Old Testament Baal worship is nothing more than a New Testament Roman Catholicism. Just packed up and repackaged and refurbished and repainted, knocked the dents out of it, and then tried to sell it again. The only thing men ever learn from history is they never learn from history. That is the way that it works. That is just the way that it works. That is why you have a wise man and a foolish man. The wise man is someone that will attain to the words of God. The foolish man will do his own thing. It is true historically, Rehoboam. It is true doctrinally in the nature of Israel. And it is true in your life and my life. God gives you a church. God gives you a pastor. God gives you Christian friends. And God gives you the Bible. There is no hard thing about understanding what is right and what is wrong in most cases. The real issue is, are you going to do what the Word of God says? How do you call yourself a Christian and not do what the Bible says? I do not understand that.

VII. The Faithful Few

He says in Revelation 3:4, and I love this part:

Thou hast a few names even in Sardis which have not defiled their garments; and they shall walk with me in white: for they are worthy.

I am going to tell you something else that you need to understand about this period of time. This is something that always has challenged my heart. This is something for me personally, and I hope at some point in your life maybe it becomes personal for you. This is a very dark time. I have done a very great injustice today in trying to lay all this out. Much of the time is frustration on my part because there is so much I want to say. There is so much information. There is so much to lay out. There is so much to talk about. There are so many angles to put this thing

through. In an hour, 10, 15 minutes, you just cannot do it. I apologize. It is just impossible. Given the fact that I am inept myself, it is just impossible to try to put all this stuff together. But I will tell you what, there are things in here that I try to focus on that have changed me because I want them to change you. I am no different than you. If they change me, they can change you. It just depends on how you grasp them.

When I look at Revelation 3:4 and it says, "Thou hast a few names in Sardis that have not defiled their garments." What an understatement. I learned a great thing from that, and that is this: I do not care how black it gets. I do not care how dark it gets. I do not care from 1000 to 1500 A.D. The "red ones" was the hardest in the "red ones" because they were being butchered. I do not care how black and bleak it is. There has never been a time in the history of the world, and there has never been a time correspondingly in the history of the Bible, where God has not had His faithful few that were willing to stand against the opposition or whatever it was. Those are the few names in Sardis. If you want to get a good book on this, John found a couple copies on the Internet a while back, and John can bear this out, one of the great little books that you will find is a book called *The Lights in the Dark Ages*. It is a great little book because there is not a lot written on this period, because they are so overshadowed by Rome. The true Bible believers are called cults. They are called heretics by even the writers of church history. But it is a great comfort to me to know, no matter where I am at, and let us face it, we are in another dark age today. If you have been saved 5, 10, 15, 20 years, I will give you the first five years. But if you have been saved seven years or more, and you do not know what I am talking about today, you have deceived yourself. I bless your heart, I love you. But there is more to life than just life itself.

Barb was reading Fox's *Book of Martyrs*, and she would come into the room, tears running down her face. She read a passage in there about a man that was facing the execution, and how it described how he died, and the last thing that he said was that Jesus was his lover, and he could not wait to embrace Him. I said to her, "You know what? They just do not write those things anymore like that." Do you know why they do not write things that way anymore? Because nobody lives that way anymore. That is why. It is incredibly moving. Yet I said to her, "The real tragedy is, we are going to have to stand side by side with him at the judgment seat of Christ." That is the real tragedy. He who figured it out, us who could not figure it out.

So when he says, "Thou hast a few names," God always has His faithful few. Guys like Arnold of Brescia, a Lombard preacher out of the Bible-believing group out of Antioch, out of North Italy, right in the middle of Waldensian territory. He preaches against the sins of Rome, calls the Pope the Antichrist. You have to understand that there were no churches like this. They preached on the street corners. This is where street preaching got its start. They had their little villages and their little hamlets. You have seen the movies. You have seen Robin Hood, Ivanhoe. You have seen all that stuff. Those little villages, the little hamlets, they were down there and they would talk to everybody and they would talk the story of Christ. Even the town criers. I have one of the most unbelievable town crier messages. You know what a town crier was, do you not? He went through every hour at night. It was done in Nördlingen, Germany, up to 1933 when Hitler took over. It had been done since the Middle Ages, or probably the Reformation. This town crier went through there, and at every strike of the hour of the clock, he winds it up to the coming of Christ

and where you are at in church history. It is incredible. The last one is six o'clock in the morning. I wish I could memorize the whole thing, but it is too intense for me. But I remember the last one, because the last one would have hit me right in the gut. Six o'clock he is coming through and he talks about the six in the morning, the Son of Man is coming. The last thing he says, echoing down through those streets in Europe, he says, "I now, 6 a.m., I go off my station. Look to your own salvation." He was gone. Last thing those people heard at six o'clock in the morning. Do you know what he was doing? He was tying it into Mark 13 and Matthew 20, just what I gave you early on this morning. He was tying it into Revelation 7. They did that from the middle of the Dark Ages, or the Reformation, right up to 1933 when Adolf Hitler said, "No, no more." It is the greatest thing. I came across it one time and I wrote it down and I have got it in the back of my other Bible. It is the greatest thing. I cannot believe, but it goes to show you that everything they did back then, the real Christians, not like us. You see, we will go to work tomorrow and we will be right back like the old world. We will go out of here and something will ruin our day and we will forget all about God. That is us. It really helps to be a Christian when they are trying to kill you. I know that is hard for you to grasp in America, but it just separates the men from the boys.

Some of you got up this morning, not you guys obviously, but some of God's people around this world got up this morning and they said, "Hmm, looks pretty nasty. I do not think I am going to church today." Back then, they got up and they said, "Ooh, looks like the Roman army has got the roadblock down there, checking everybody's papers. Okay, Lord, I have to get to church." That is the difference. It does not mean anything anymore. It is a convenience thing. It is like the football game, just like the things at the Y. It gets canceled. We just do not have the urgency today to understand that these people paid for it with their life. What you have to do is get up and decide whether you are going to go do this or go do that. "I am going to go with the world. I am going to go with God." Back then, they did not have that choice. Their choice was, "Am I going to go to church and get an 85-cent probability I am not coming home today?" That makes a difference. The difference is like a woman whose husband works down at Crown Center someplace, and he goes into the office, and a military wife whose husband is over in Iraq. Your husband goes to work. He has a very good chance, more than a good chance that he is coming home. When he goes into the business meetings in there, they may raise their language a little bit and they may have some opposition, but nobody is pulling out M16s and AK47s and killing each other. The little girl whose husband is in Iraq or Iran, he goes to work in the morning. He has a one chance in four of not coming home this afternoon. Yet we sit over here and we think, "Oh, what does your husband do? He is over in Iraq." "Oh, yeah, my husband works at Hallmark. My husband had a really tough day yesterday." "Really?" "Yeah. Well, the air conditioner broke and it was just so hot." She will never say, "Well, my husband is over there and it is 112. He has a flak vest on. He has a bulletproof vest. He has all his BDDs on. He has everything on, and it is 112." "Well, my husband just had a tough day yesterday." "What happened?" "All the computers broke. They all had to think. It was just hard." We as God's people have had it too easy. I am giving you a fair warning, Christian. Do what you want to do with it. You are going to stand at the judgment seat of Christ with guys like Arnold of Brescia, Henry of Lausanne. There come the Henricians. The Henricians were street preachers. Do you know what they did? They moved up into Bulgaria and up into Bohemia, and John Hus got saved and got called the Hussites, and they

just absolutely took over Europe. Roger Bacon, Lothar of the Flanders. Savonarola, there is a good one. Savonarola was a Roman Catholic priest. I love this. He was a Roman Catholic priest. He saw the corruption in the Roman Catholic Church. Every message he preached, he preached against the sins of Rome. He preached on the street. He preached in his services. He stopped doing the mass. He started having people come to get saved. The Roman Catholic Pope called him in and he said, "Savonarola, if you just shut your mouth, I know you are just a lowly priest, if you shut your mouth and just will not say anything about the church anymore, I will give you the red hat of a cardinal." Do you know what Savonarola said? He says, "Give me a red hat of blood." He went out and preached some more, and he got one. They martyred him and killed him.

John Hus. There was a time in John Hus's life in the 1400s when the whole country of Czechoslovakia followed John Hus and his teaching. About 1416-1420, somewhere in there, he got so sideways with the Pope, and the Pope hated him so bad that Pope John XIII said to John Hus, "You need to come down here and we need to have a little meeting." He said, "I will tell you what I will do, John. I will give you safe passage all the way down and all the way back. If we do not work it out together and we cannot get it worked out and it is a thing, you can go back, but we need to have a talk and try to iron out our differences." John Hus said, and the Pope said, "I will give you my word. I will give you a safe conduct to it, safe conduct back to Bohemia." John came down the moment he was in, he was arrested, thrown in a dungeon, tortured, and had his head cut off. When somebody questioned the Pope how he would go back on his word, the same justification that the CIA uses in Guatemala, that they use in El Salvador, that they used in Poland, right on down through the history of the world. But men never learned from history. It is when you are dealing with heretics, you do not have to keep your word. Business as usual. But he has a few names in Sardis. I told you last week John Wycliffe, the first English translation of the Bible called the Morning Star of the Reformation, how he brought the first English translation to the common man.

Let me tell you something, my friend. When the Bible says, and it says this seven times in the first three chapters of Revelation, seven times, he says this to you and to me. Seven times he says, "He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches." Seven times he tells you if you have ears, hear what I am saying, because my friend, there is an importance to understanding where you are at in history. That is what this church is about. It is about getting you ready in these last days to serve God. We do not play any games here. It is all about the book, all about the Word of God, all about getting men and women, helping moms and dads be better husbands and wives, helping moms and dads be better parents, helping kids be better kids, helping everybody perfect themselves to the work of the ministry that they can find what God has called for them to do, and then allowing God to do it. That is what it is about. You will never do that until you first understand what I have talked about today, the importance of knowing where you have come from. I am going to say it one more time, and then I am going to close. If you do not know where you come from, you do not know where you are going. If you do not know where you come from and you do not know where you are going, please do not kid yourself in thinking you know where you are at. The importance of understanding our heritage, the importance of men and women, telling the world to go take a long walk off the street.