

Intro. I once heard of an agnostic farmer who wrote to the editor of his local newspaper, who was a Christian. He said; “In defiance of your God I plowed my fields this year on Sunday, I disked and fertilized them on Sunday, I planted them on a Sunday, I cultivated them on Sunday, and I reaped them on Sunday. This October I had the biggest crop I have ever had. How do you explain that?” The editor replied: “God does not always settle his accounts in October” (*Lou Nicholes, Word of Life Fellowship, Schroon Lake, NY*). Some people assume because God hasn’t brought the final judgment yet, that they won’t ever have to experience it, but nothing could be farther from the truth. Just because a juvenile delinquent commits a crime & doesn’t get caught immediately doesn’t mean he has gotten away with it—judgment day will come—so it is with this world of sin. As we pick up in Revelation 17 again, we continue looking at “God’s Judgment on the Word—False Religion, Part 2.”

Theme: God’s judgment

Background: While being persecuted for his own faith in Jesus by being exiled on the island of Patmos, John the Apostle received a revelation from Christ as a series of visions about the end-times and the increase of evil & persecution of the church.

- Because there is so much in this chapter, it was virtually impossible to cram it all into one message, but there also isn’t a great place to break it up, since it is interwoven throughout the chapter. Thus, if you missed last time, you will want to go back & listen to the sermon & access the notes (fbsweetwater.org/Resources/Sermons)
- Much like last time, I want to explain a few things in the text & give a couple of areas of application

Explanation of the Text:

1. Unbelievers do not have their names written in the Lamb’s book of life (17:2, 8, 15; 13:7-8)

- Having one’s name written down in the Lamb’s book of life points to God’s control in salvation
- Having it written down before the foundation of the world points to God’s election by grace
- Having it written down in the Lamb who was slain before the foundation of the world (13:7-8; cf. 1 Peter 1:19-20) means Christ had your salvation in mind even before time began—that’s amazing!
- Unbelievers are not the recipients of God’s saving grace

Illus: Most people don’t expect to have their names written in a book. Recently I published a Christmas devotional entitled *The Joy of Jesus at Christmas: A 31-Day Devotional for December*. In the acknowledgements section, I mention how much of my work for the book was done at the library of the Baptist College of Florida. I mention a few workers by name who helped me while I was there. A few weeks ago, I went back to preach in chapel of my alma mater & gave a free copy to those who helped me & they were blown away to see their name in print—I refer to that because just as most people don’t expect to see their name in print, so unbelievers won’t be surprised when they don’t find their name in the Lamb’s Book of Life but just as people get excited to see their name in print, so believers will be excited to have their names written in the Lamb’s Book of Life!

2. The 10 horns are a confederation of kings throughout the world (17:12)—their reigns will be short-lived

- The 10 horns may be literal, referring to 10 world powers, either as “kings from the east” (16:12) or as 10 European powers; or the 10 may be a symbol of the totality of powers on the earth coming together to unite behind the antichrist
- These 10 horns are probably the 10 toes in Nebuchadnezzar’s dream (Daniel 2) as well as the 10 horns on the 4th beast Daniel saw rising from the sea (Daniel 7)

3. The 10 kings & antichrist will turn against the woman (17:16-17)

- The fate of the prostitute reminds us of Ezekiel's vivid allegory of Oholibah (Ezekiel 23:11-35)—she lusted after the Assyrians (23:12), was defiled by the Babylonians (23:17) & played the harlot in the land of Egypt (23:19). The Babylonians would deal with her in hatred (23:29), strip off her clothes & take away her jewelry (23:26), leave her naked & bare (23:29), cut off her nose & ears (23:25) & devour her with fire (23:25)
- When the beast, the antichrist, no longer has use of the woman (false religion), he will sick his dogs, the 10 kings, on her to ravage, kill & burn her

Illus: Eating her flesh may reference the dogs which ate the body of wicked Queen Jezebel (2 Kings 9:30-37)—Jezebel was a form of false religion in Rev. 2:20

Application of the Text:

1. Believe in God's sovereignty over all events, including the end times (17:1, 14, 17)

- The angel showed John the "judgment" God will carry out on the prostitute (17:1)
- Although the antichrist & confederation of nations will gather to make war on Christ the Lamb, they won't stand a chance, for they will be easily defeated (17:14)
- Christ is Lord of lords & King of kings—even the kings of this confederation are no match for the One True King & the rule of the antichrist is no match for the One True Lord
- All these things are done because "God has put it into their hearts to carry out His purpose" (17:17)
- While the Bible does not say God hardens the hearts of all unbelievers or put into the hearts of all unbelievers to work against Him, we do see God harden the hearts of key figures to make His name great & to deliver His people—Pharaoh and the Egyptian army (Exodus 4:21; 7:3; 14:4, 8, 17-18), Sihon king of Heshbon (Deuteronomy 2:30), the northern kings of Canaan (Joshua 11:20), Nebuchadnezzar (Daniel 5:20-21), parts of Israel (Isaiah 63:17), religious people in Jesus' day (John 12:40-43) & others (Romans 9:18), including the antichrist & this confederation of kings just before Jesus returns (Revelation 17:17)
- Why does God do these things? For His purpose of making His name great & delivering His people (each of those contexts speak to that matter)

2. Believe in God's sovereignty in salvation & your own responsibility to turn to Christ (17:8, 14; cf. 3:5; 13:8; 20:12, 15)

- As I said earlier, God is in control in salvation & He elects whomever He desires by His grace, not according to anything we do

Illus: God's sovereignty, however, doesn't negate our responsibility—we must still turn from sin & turn to Christ—unbelievers don't get to stand before God one day and say, "the reason I'm not going to heaven is Your fault, because you didn't elect me." He will say, "the reason you are not going into heaven is because you never turned from your sin & trusted in Christ"

- As a matter of fact, terms for both God's sovereignty & man's responsibility are used here—"called, chosen & faithful"—"called" & "chosen" point to God's work of choosing us by His grace & effectually calling us to Himself through His Son (see John 6:37, 44, 65)
- "faithful" refers to the obedience of the believer who has been declared in the right by God through faith in Jesus; they have shown themselves to be trustworthy

Conc. The late Southern Baptist evangelist, R.G. Lee, had a message he often preached entitled "Payday Someday." The thrust of the message was that you may live a life of sin and appear to be getting away with it but *judgment* is sure to come, whether in this life or in eternity. Why keep putting off what needs to be done today? Surrender your life to the Lord of lords & King of kings.