

# Acts 19\_pt2

by Bill Gallatin

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*The sermon emphasizes the importance of following Jesus Christ and avoiding idolatry and false religions, and highlights the significance of desire for the Word of God in a true Christian's life.*

**Duration:** 1:08:22

**Scripture:** Matthew 6:33, John 8:32, Acts 17:29-30, Revelation 14:11

**Topics:** "Expositional"

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## Description

In this sermon, the preacher discusses the concept of worshiping the beast and receiving the mark of his name as described in the Bible. He emphasizes the importance of knowing the truth and being discerning in order to avoid being deceived by false teachings. The preacher warns that technology is advancing rapidly and that the ability for an image of Jesus to speak is imminent. He also highlights the chaos and confusion that can arise when large crowds gather, particularly when fueled by religious fervor. The sermon references biblical passages such as Revelation and Acts to support these teachings.

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## Transcript

We're coming into Ephesus where Paul, representing the Lord, is bringing a confrontation with light and darkness, and again strongholds of Satan are being confronted. And the greatest strongholds, many times, that Satan has are not absolute ignorance of God, but in religion. Satan is a deeply religious created being, and he can bind people up, cultures, civilizations, millions of people in religion, and keep them from the light of the gospel and the truth.

And wherever the gospel begins to be transmitted, you're going to have confrontation. And it's interesting how the apostles shared the truth, and how God honored it, and how it affected things. Now, you remember in verse 20, we should look at verse 20, this was after the sons of Sceva learned their lesson that you can't just use the name of Jesus to overcome the powers of darkness if you're not a child of God.

Absolute impossibility and a very dangerous thing to fool around with the kingdom of darkness and not be a true believer. We have accounts, and I know of accounts of people who went absolutely insane, stark raving mad, entering into Hindu temples, trying to deal with these things and not being born again. Amazing what can happen to a human being that dabbles in darkness, whether they begin to innocently fool around with a Ouija board, horoscopes, the occult, maybe a seeming innocent thing and going to the state fair and sticking your palm in some kind of a machine or something and having your whatever read.

And then maybe one little thing might say something that you didn't know, how could they know that? And the hook is there and begin to draw you into something. It's real. And Satan can really lock people up in that.

And then Jesus Christ's gospel and his light sets us free. And notice what was taking place. God was following the word of God with signs and wonders whenever he thought it was necessary.

And it says, so mightily grew the word of God and prevailed. Where there is a work of the Spirit in a heart, there's a desire for the word of God. When there is a true work of God by his Spirit in a miraculous way in a human heart, there is a prevailing and a desire and a growth and an increase in the word of God in that heart.

I believe with all my heart that if someone has no desire to read the word of God, I doubt their true salvation. As much as I even doubt that a baby can be born without having a food drive or a hunger drive for the breast, for the milk. Because the apostle Peter declares graphically in his epistle that as a new child, as a baby in Christ, we are to desire the milk of the word.

And so when the Spirit of God is really working in a life and a heart is converted, God supernaturally puts a hunger drive for the milk of the word. If that drive isn't in you, I question my salvation. And I will take, we'll leave allowance for backsliding, carnality, sin and all those things.

But if there isn't a real desire for the word of God, don't try to convince me that you are a born again Christian. Because the Bible says absolutely not. There's an automatic hunger drive.

A desire to know more about the Lord. A desire to read the word of God. Because the Spirit of God who dwells in the heart puts the desire there.

And we pray that nobody comes to Calvary Chapel with the finger legs thinking that they're going to be a saved Christian. Because they've changed religions or denominations and started coming to Calvary and submitted to a water baptism. Or intellectually agreed with what I've been saying for years and think, well I'm born again now.

I like Calvary. Please don't be under that deception in this church. I would reevaluate, reexamine your conversion and see if it's real or not.

It's imperative. The Bible declares it. I'm not trying to be Mr. Meany.

The Bible declares it. And it's laid out graphically in the epistle of John. When the Spirit of God enters into a heart, there's a change, there's a life, a desire.

I'm even concerned about the people that come to this church and walk in and aren't carrying their Bibles anymore. Either I am failing as a pastor and I need to leave. Or something, we definitely as a church need to get on our faces and seek God again.

I don't see how anybody can be a Christian and not go anywhere and not have their Bible and see the power that it has. I don't see how they can continue. We are hearing horror stories in our church.

Families are on the brink, taking their salvation for granted. The calls are coming in at an alarming rate of people that have been coming to this church for a long time and they can't figure out what's happened to their marriage. What's happened? Why is this going on? And then invariably you find out they have not

been in fellowship, they're not reading the Word, they haven't been praying together, they've just taken it for granted and they've fallen asleep.

And Satan is ripping people off. We are in the last days. It may not be the last hour.

It'd be great if it was tonight. Wouldn't it? Would you give up this weekend for the rapture? I would. It'd be a delight.

But it's so wonderful to see a desire for the Word of God grow in a heart. I love to read my Bible more now than ever. I just love to get in.

I love to wake up and get into it and see what God would have to say. Some new thing. Or bring myself under conviction to know me that I might know the corruption of my own heart.

Realize how weak I am. And how wonderful Jesus Christ is. He is always there in my weakness.

So mightily grew the Word of God and prevailed. When God's Word is growing in a person's heart and life, that Christian prevails over sin. As we touched on, I think, last week, the gates of hell cannot prevail against God's church or His individuals in His church.

That's a promise from Jesus. After these things were ended, Paul purposed in his spirit, or in the spirit, when he had passed through Macedonia, Achaia, to go to Jerusalem, saying, After I have been there, I must also see Rome. When we get later in the book of Acts, a few years later, it's going to be wonderful to see how God gets Paul to Rome.

And it should encourage us all when God unexpectedly changes the routine in our life. And again, when we begin to go into an apathy because things are easy and all of a sudden our Christianity becomes a routine, God loves us enough to change the circumstances to stir things up for our own benefit. To keep us needing Him.

To keep us from cooling off and fulfilling Scripture that because iniquity will abound in the last days, many, many hearts will wax cold. And so God loves us so much, He says, I don't want you to cool off. So here's an alarming letter.

Here's a startling doctor's report. Here's a phone call that caught you off guard. Here's a reaction to something from a brother or a sister.

An event has taken place and you need now, I really, my prayer, it's amazing how my prayer has changed. All of a sudden the dust is off the Bible. And I'm on my knees now to pray, not to pop something in the VCR.

And so he sent unto Macedonia two of them that ministered unto him, Timothy and Erastus, but he himself stayed in Asia for a season. Now, if you look at the book of Corinthians, you remember that Paul received love offerings from churches that could give these gifts, particularly the Macedonians, and he would personally take the funds to the church in Jerusalem because the church in Jerusalem was extremely poor. It never became a very rich church because of the persecution from the Jews.

Those Jews that really did follow Jesus Christ, there was persecution. And Paul had taught that and they would give love offerings to Paul and Timothy and the saints and Silas, and as they would go back to Jerusalem, they would take the love offerings to help the poor saints in Jerusalem. And this was Paul's

purpose here.

And it's interesting, Erastus is an interesting guy. He was the chamberlain of the city of Corinth. He was the treasurer of the city and he was a believer.

And he was one of the individuals who was going with Paul who was going to take this love offering to the poor saints in Jerusalem that were always being persecuted by the Jews because they thought, well, you've left the faith. You've departed from Judaism. You've forsaken the law of Moses.

And so they were having a difficult time getting good employment because they were Christians now. But they didn't deny the Lord. They didn't deny the Lord to get a job or make more money.

And so God provided for their needs with the churches outside of Jerusalem when they got word of it to get the money to them. And at the same time, there arose no small stir about that way. Now what was that way? Jesus Christ.

Remember now, Paul is going into one of the hot beds of idolatry of the world. A Roman province, Ephesus, one of the main cities to the gates of Asia. A main highway from Ephesus to Rome.

A port city. Magnificent city. And Satan's stronghold in the worship of Artemis or Diana or Aphrodite depending on what nation was around the Mediterranean.

But it was all the same individual. This queen of heaven. This female goddess and deity that the known world then prayed to.

She was the mediator between man and God. The God Baal. The distortion of Ashtoreth from Babylon.

And it was such a powerful thing. They would celebrate the whole month of May worshiping Diana. And hundreds of thousands of people from all around the Mediterranean would come to her magnificent temple in Ephesus.

Remember, it was 418 feet long, 239 feet wide. It had 157 solid marble columns over 60 feet high. It was greater than the Greek Parthenon.

It was one of the eight wonders of the world. This huge, huge temple to Diana, the queen of heaven. And so this is that time of year, it's in May, when thousands of pilgrims from all over the world would spend a month celebrating and worshiping Diana who supposedly came from Jupiter, a black meteorite.

And so they had images of her out of this black stone. As it went on, the interesting thing is when we visited Ephesus, one of the great commercial enterprises of tourism around Turkey and that portion of the Mediterranean are statues or images of Diana to this day. They are the most grotesque things you ever saw.

Because she was the goddess of sexual pleasure and reproduction, they had this grotesque image of her with the whole front of her was breasts. We walked into a major hotel in a city called Izmir on the coast of Turkey before we went up to Ephesus. We flew into Izmir which is the Bible named Smyrna where one of the churches of the book of Revelation was established and they suffered terribly persecution and poverty.

And Jesus said, you Christians in Smyrna, you don't even have two nickels to rub together but great is your faith. Your faith is tremendous. You're remaining faithful to me even in persecution.

It's interesting to this day there's an existing church in Smyrna but in Ephesus, the city that left its first love, there isn't a trace of Christianity to this day. The candlestick had been removed just as Jesus warned. No church, just a village with some Muslims.

This magnificent city, one of the greatest cities in the world, is now just an archaeological, you know, tourist thing to visit. In the hotel lobby when we walked in, waiting to meet up with our pastor who was coming from inland Turkey, was a gigantic 15-foot statue of Diana in the lobby. The most grotesque thing you ever saw.

Every archaeological site we went to, they were selling her statues all over the area. To this day, there's a stronghold and people are making money selling shrines and images of her. Two thousand years later.

Now the way is what Jesus said. I am the way, the truth and the light. Not myself and Diana.

Jesus didn't say, I and Moses are the way. I and the Apostle Paul or anybody else. Jesus said I. It's singular.

I am. And it's the very I am. He used the expression that he revealed himself to Moses in the burning bush.

I am. When Moses said, Who are you? Who shall I say sent me when I go to deliver the people with your hand? He said, Tell them I am that I am. And so Jesus said, I am.

Over and over again, particularly in the Gospel of John, announcing I am. I am. And he said, I am the way and the truth and the life.

And that's wonderful to me. As we've touched on this before. He's not one of the ways.

He's the way. Roman Catholicism is not the way. The Calvary Chapel movement is not the way.

Baptists aren't the way. Lutheranism isn't the way. Jesus is the way.

And these other organizations have many, many people that are following Jesus that happen to just feel comfortable in those different areas on the way. But they better be following Jesus Christ. I am the way, the truth, and the life.

Now, why is that so advantageous? He didn't say, I'll give you directions. He says, No, I'm the way. I will lead you.

What would you rather have me do? If I told you, and I'm notorious for drawing maps for people. I've gotten more people lost getting into Franklin, Pennsylvania. Some people have never gotten back.

I don't know what's happened to them. They wanted to go on a retreat down in Pennsylvania, and we haven't seen them since. They took one of my maps.

And I really think they're great maps. But I'm going to tell you, this is how you get to such and such an address in St. Louis. And I sit down, and I meticulously write everything out and give you the road map and all the different diagrams and different highways, where to turn, where to go toward Columbus down there, and then you go west on Route 40, and you drive through Indianapolis, and then you get into St. Louis.

When you get to St. Louis, go to off-ramp Fleet Street, exit 80A, and then go left and take a right four stoplights down, the Safeway store, take another left, and then I hand you the map. I'll see you there. Or would you rather say, Bill, could you just jump in the car and drive us? Because I've been there before and know all about it.

See, what's the best way? Jump in the car and drive you there. Jesus said, I am the way. I'm going to take you there.

You just go with me. I will lead you right to glory. I am the way, the truth.

You can trust me. I'm the truth. I will never lie to you.

You can never go wrong. And I am the way. And so God's made it very simple.

I will not only lead you, I will do it truthfully, and there aren't two ways. I'm one of the two ways. I'm one of the three ways.

No, I am the way, the truth. And that makes it so wonderful. I don't have to worry about getting lost.

There's only one way to get there. And it's a straight and a narrow path without any confusion. And all I have to do is keep my eyes on Him.

He will lead me right there. He will lead you right there. And see, that's what they were teaching.

Religions of Paul's, they were saying, all paths lead to God. Just so you're moral and good. Just so you're a good upstanding citizen.

Obey the laws of your country. Do your best. Be kind to your fellow man.

Keep the rituals and our feast days and holy days and go through some ceremonies. Our priests will guarantee that you'll get there if you memorize a few prayers. That was the Babylonian priesthood.

You memorize a few prayers and creeds and submit to certain rituals and keep certain feast days and holy days. We guarantee we will get you there. Our system will get you there.

Here you see the Gospels coming and say there's one way. His name is Jesus following Him. And He is the way.

And boy, there's opposition. See, this is throwing things off. This is throwing light on Satan's kingdom.

It also affects something else too because it's interesting. Many, many, many men and women made their living selling shrines for these special holy days. People loved to go and visit this great temple from all over the world and buy little shrines and images of the Queen of Heaven.

And they would get hooked because they were made out of silver and gold and so there was value in it. And they would be blessed by one of the pagan priests. And boy, they'd take it home and put it in their home, a shrine to Diana.

And so there's a lot of money made in this religious system in the worship of Diana. When the people started meeting Jesus Christ, they realized that's idolatry. The Bible forbids that.

Having any kind of an image or a statue or a likeness that represents God. Not only not having it, bowing down to it, praying to it, or having it in our homes, you see. And so as they were listening to Paul teaching, they were making decisions.

Remember, we learned last week that they got rid of all their unclean literature and their occult books and their horoscope magazines. They just took everything out into the center of the street, anything that had anything to do with their past religion and they burned it all. Remember, thousands and thousands and thousands of dollars worth because they'd truly been converted.

And they realized now deity does not dwell in some little box or shrine or a statue. I've been converted. I'm a shrine now.

Deity dwells in me. What an honor. And so God isn't on my mantle or in my bedroom or in a den made out of silver or a little shrine that I have to go to to feel holiness or get in some kind of a mood or light a candle before.

He's in my heart. I'm a shrine. As Paul said to the Corinthians who were deeply engrossed in this, you remember, until they were being set free in 1 Corinthians 3.16, know you not that you are the temple of God and God dwells within you.

The Spirit of God is dwelling in you. You're the shrine. What an honor and a privilege that just a pile of dirt.

God says, I'll make you my shrine. Just some old, worn out, beat up clay that I have redeemed. You've become my shrine.

Scientifically on the market, what are you worth? About \$1.67? That's about it. But God says, Oh, are you valuable? So valuable, I became a man and gave my life for you. And I'll make your body my shrine.

Look at Deuteronomy chapter 7. Now, please remember before Paul went into Ephesus to preach the gospel to free millions of people trapped by Satan in this religion. In 1491 B.C., God Almighty revealed Himself in His majesty on Mount Sinai. Now the people never saw Him.

Remember He said, No man has seen God and can live. He said, You saw no shape, no form that met with you on Mount Sinai. So don't have an image or something like that to represent me.

I want personal relationship. And He said something interesting in Deuteronomy 7. Because remember, God knew as soon as He delivered Egypt, God knows the end from the beginning. He knows the end of the age, when He's going to return, and what Antichrist is going to do to the human race with the beast.

And so God wanted to ingrain in His people, in their minds and hearts, stay clear of idolatry. Anything that represents me, maintain a living, vital relationship with me through faith. I will honor it by my spirit and my presence.

So you will not be open to deception. Now, as He's going to lead these people into the land of Canaan, and remember, Babylon has already been influencing the world. Look at verse 25 of Deuteronomy 7. There's a promise of victory if they'll be obedient to Him.

And they're going into a land now that already worship only under different nomenclature, different terminology, a satanic lie, a female deity that you pray to. With a multitude of other gods. But remember now, He said, now here's the commandments to protect yourself, that my blessings will be upon you.

Thou shalt not have any image that's been graven by a tool or an instrument that represents me in your home, a picture or a likeness of me, nor bow down thyself to it. You see, He's separating His people, after their deliverance, from paganism and the deception of Satan for the rest of their life if they'll be obedient. Now look at verse 25.

The graven images of their gods shall you burn with fire. Thou shalt not desire the silver or gold that is on them. In other words, don't allow what it's made of to stop you from being obedient to God.

Nor take it unto thee lest thou be snared therein, for it is an abomination to the Lord thy God. Now you see, here's a test of faith for people who say they love God. Well, I inherited this from Grandma.

Yes, but Grandma was a pagan. But you don't know what it's going to do to the family if I get rid of it. That's your choice.

You see, there's the fear of man. There's where the fear of man will stop a child of God from being faithful to the Lord. Fear of their own family.

And that's why the Bible's very faithful and clear. It says, see, the fear of man brings a snare upon a life. Be afraid what a family member will think and not be concerned of what God will think.

Neither shalt thou bring an abomination into thine house. You say, well, I don't bow down before it. I don't worship it.

God says, don't bring it in your house. And again, I'm convinced. That's why a lot of people don't want to read the Bible.

They're afraid they're going to see something and have to make a decision in life. So they'd rather say, I love the Lord and stay ignorant. But that's not really loving the Lord.

And they don't grow. I'd rather grow, know more, be challenged more, and prove my love for God more. The benefits are there.

As I see people falling by the wayside, as we get closer and closer to the end, I'm staying close to God. I love them too much to be concerned about a human relationship and be disobedient to my Lord, who I love with all my heart, and I know loves me so much that He died for me. So he says, don't even bring it in your house, lest thou be a cursed thing like it.

But thou shalt utterly detest it, and thou shalt abhor it, for it is a cursed thing. I'll turn to Deuteronomy, I think it's 16. God, you see, again knew that they were going into a land where it was firmly entrenched by Satan to worship this female deity.

The Egyptians worshipped her as Isis. The Ephesians, Diana. The Romans, Artemis.

The Greeks, Aphrodite. The Babylonians, Ashtaroth, or Esther, where you get the English word Easter. Now they built groves to this female deity.

Beautiful groves. If you saw the remains of the temple in Ephesus, you can imagine how beautiful the gardens were to this female deity. Notice verse 21 of Deuteronomy 16.

Now this is before they even get to the land. God says, now this is what's there. This is tolerated by the pagans.

All religions lead to God. This is just part of it. Don't let this defile you.

Thou shalt not plant thee a grove of any trees near unto the altar of the Lord thy God which thou shalt make thee, neither shalt thou set thee up any image which the Lord thy God hateth. He hates imagery. See, all it does really, again, is reveal the weakness of the relationship of the individual with God.

That they need an image or an amulet or some kind of an icon or something in their home to remind them of God. When God says, you are my shrine, your heart, but you see, does he have the heart? If he doesn't have the heart, I need to resort to something else. I need to smell incense, see a candle, see a picture.

I haven't learned to hear the real voice. I don't know him enough. Is he in my heart? Am I the shrine? Is he taking over my heart? You see, he wants to.

But he won't do it against our will. Remember the woman at the well? Jesus said, you know, you say you believe in Jesus or Messiah, the Christ. Now remember, he was right in front of her and she was deeply religious and was waiting for the coming of the Messiah and she didn't even know who he was.

The same as today. Many, many people believe in Christ. They say, I believe in Christ.

They go to church every Sunday to some organization that represents the belief in Christ. They don't even know who he is. And she didn't know who he was.

Remember he said, God is a spirit. They that worship him must worship him in spirit and truth, not in pictures and statues and incense and candles like the pagans. And then he revealed himself to her.

Remember? In his marvelous forgiveness and love. This is what he's done to you and I. Look at Acts 17. Remember what Paul told them earlier? Again, as he's preaching the gospel.

Now, he's not attacking them. He's giving them the truth. And it's the truth that makes us free.

Free from what? Sin, error, wrong ideas, misconceptions. But the truth makes us free. Religion binds up and traps, particularly false religion.

It's such a snare. There are people that come under condemnation if they miss a feast day in some religion. Or a ritual in some religion.

And Jesus Christ has set us free in a living relationship with him. Walking with him. Look at verse 24 of Acts 17.

It's good to repeat this. Paul, again, is in Athens in Greece on the other side of the Aegean Sea before he's gotten to Ephesus. God that made the world and all things therein, seeing that he is the Lord of heaven and earth, dwelleth not in temples made with hands.

Actually, he dwells in temples made with a sperm and an egg. He's designed. In a marvelous, biological, wonderful miracle.

Neither is he worshipped with men's hands. He's not impressed with fancy buildings. As though he needed anything.

Seeing he giveth to all life and breath and all things, and is made of one blood. We're all one blood, folks. There's no inferior, no superior human being, no matter what color they are, what their racial background is.

We're all of one blood. All nations, for men to dwell on the face of the earth, and he hath determined the times before appointed and the bounds of their habitation. He's even designed the races and their national boundaries, first purposes.

As he's landlocked them through different circumstances and cultural changes and language changes and genetic locks, where they begin to change in their features and lock in a different pigmentation in their skin, a slant of the eye. You see, God's designed it all for his glory. And he's glorified in all of it.

All the beauty of the different races. And he's appointed the bounds of their habitation. That they should seek the Lord, if happily they might feel after him and find him, though he be not far from every one of us.

He's right at the door of our lips if we just call on him. And he loves, you see, he's there for every race, every culture, every type of people on the earth. That's his door.

He loves to reveal himself. Anybody will call on him. And not change their culture, just all of a sudden glorify the culture even more in the true knowledge of who God is.

That was one of the biggest problems of American missionaries. They'd go into different countries to share Christ and try to make everybody they converted into Americans. Dress like an American, eat like an American, think like an American, sing like an American, adopt American Christian music.

No way. God doesn't do that. He doesn't change the culture.

He's designed the cultural differences and he can be glorified in all of it. Whether it's worship from one country to another, it doesn't have to be identical and cloned. That was one of the biggest failures of American missionaries.

Now you're saved. You can't run around with a loincloth in the Amazon River Basin. Why not? Where does it say that in the Bible? You've got to put a suit and a tie on after you meet Jesus.

And I don't have to go down there, you see. Now this is what Paul said. He said he became all things to all people.

So whatever culture he was in, he adopted their culture, their lifestyle, their food, everything, that he might win them to Christ. That's true missionary. For in him we live and move and have our being, as certain also of your own poets have said, for we are also his offspring.

Now, people say, well, you know, Bill, the 10 Commandments are the Old Testament and it talks about not having a graven image or a picture or something and having it in your home or bowing down to it and worshipping. That's the Old Testament. This is the book of Acts.

What testament is the book of Acts in? Before we read this again. New Testament, right? The Age of Grace, right? Look at verse 29. For as much then as we are the offspring of God, we ought not to think that the Godhead is like undue gold or silver or stone or graven by art and man's device.

And the times of this ignorance, God winked at. But now, this is the Age of Grace. New Testament, what's he say? What are we supposed to do now? He commandeth all men everywhere to repent.

Don't do it anymore. Now, Paul's bringing this message. He did it in Athens.

And remember, riots. Satan's upset. Now, he's coming to Ephesus across the Aegean Sea, another stronghold of Satan, in the worship of this Diana.

And people are making their living, loving these holidays and these feasts. People showing up. The tourists, the pilgrims by the thousands from all over the known world come and visit the shrine and buy the little silver statues and shrines of Diana.

Unless they're converted and know the truth and leave that pagan idolatry. And a certain man named Demetrius, a silversmith, which made silver shrines for Diana, brought no small gain unto the craftsmen. They made a lot of money.

They made their living off the pilgrims buying their shrines. Whom he called together with the workmen of like occupation and said, Sirs, you know that by this craft we have our wealth. This is how we make our living.

Off the pilgrims buying the shrines. Moreover, you see and hear that not alone at Ephesus, but almost throughout all Asia. This Paul hath persuaded and turned away much people, saying that they be no gods that are made with hands.

People aren't buying the statues anymore. Now, isn't it interesting? People are being converted and coming into a real relationship with God, but because it affects someone's livelihood, they'd rather withhold their idolatry and uphold the pagan system and something that violates God, than rejoice in a life being converted. They'd rather have to stay an alcoholic and bow down before the statue than be born again and delivered.

Remember in Mark, and I think in Matthew, the other accounts of the demon-possessed men of the Gadarenes. And people didn't, you know, they had a social program for them. They'd lock them up in chains and put them in a nice comfortable cave.

It might have been a padded cave, but they'd put them in chains and they said they had a plan to take care of them. It says, but because of the demons, he was so strong, he'd break the chains right off of them in his padded cave. Jesus goes across the Galilee, and this guy goes running down to the feet of Jesus, falls on his face and acknowledges him as Lord and God, and he's converted, and Jesus cast the demons out.

Remember, his name was Legion, and 6,000 demons were in him. You talk about someone being labeled a paranoid schizophrenic with multiple personalities. Can you imagine what the psychiatrist would tell this guy today? You are definitely schizophrenic, Bob.

Can you imagine how many voices would speak out of him if they had him, you know, trying to psychoanalyze him? Jesus delivers them, and the demons are horrified because they know where they're going and they know what their end is, and they plead with Jesus not to put them in that place of torment, in the pit before their time. And Jesus acknowledges that and lets them go into a herd of swine, and a whole herd of swine go absolutely berserk, run down off the cliffs of Galilee there, into the Sea of Galilee,

and drown. And the merchants are all upset and want Jesus to get out of the country.

Now, it's forbidden in the law for the Jews to raise swine. It's an unclean animal. They're making a living raising swine.

They see one of their own citizens delivered from demons, freed from his mental torment in his right mind. They're frightened. They want Jesus out of town because he's destroyed their livelihood.

They'd rather have the swine and a sick human being than have Jesus deliver somebody and have to give up their business. We'll design a social program and take care of this sick guy, but don't destroy our livelihood. We're not going to stop raising pigs.

Same thing. They should be rejoicing. We have a citizen in our country, in our town, who's been mentally unstable.

We couldn't keep him with chains, living in tombs, cutting himself, trying to commit suicide. Look, they didn't say one thing about him being in his right mind. They said, what have you done to our swine? Please leave, Jesus.

You see, you go up right down Canaan and Dagua's main street and some of the side streets, you see the swine. We don't care if we make them alcoholics, but don't touch our swine. Don't take away our liquor license.

Don't kill our swine. You see, Satan can trap millions of people in religion and still keep the swine. And the society will build systems that take care of the people, the very people they destroy, but they're going to keep raising their swine.

Jesus comes along. They want to get rid of Jesus. Not religion, but Jesus.

And this is exactly what took place. People are getting saved, but the people that are building the shrines are losing money. The pilgrims are getting saved.

So that not only this, our craft is in danger, to be said it not, but also that the temple of the great goddess Diana should be despised. And her magnificence should be destroyed, whom all Asia and the world worshipeth. It's interesting.

When Marco Polo went to China and began to share his Catholic faith, he was shocked, because in China's religion from their past that preceded Catholicism, they already had beads that they prayed over and they prayed to the Virgin. Only they had a different name for her, from Babylon. It's firmly entrenched in the whole human race, you see, from the Garden of Eden, from the Tower of Babel, from Babylon, just under different nomenclature, different names.

And when someone comes to the true knowledge of Jesus Christ and says, Lord, I love you in Scriptures more than myself, more than what my family may think, more than what it may be worth, because it's made out of silver and gold, it's a no-brainer, Lord. I love you. It's out of my house.

It's out of my life. When they heard these sayings, they were full of wrath. And that does happen.

And there's that confrontation again, the firmly entrenched thing of Satan with a religion, and Jesus Christ comes on the scene. There's anger. There's wrath.

And they cried out saying, Great is Diana of Ephesians. Now, the theater there is the main street of Ephesus, holds 20,000 to 30,000 people. It's a magnificent theater.

You can still see it today and visit it. We walked right into it. The main street, solid marble, and this magnificent theater.

It put Frontier Field to shame. Made out of marble. And so it's filled up with 20,000 to 30,000 people that are upset because here this guy is teaching about Jesus Christ in the way, and people are letting go, of Diana.

And so they stirred the crowd up. The merchants stirred up the people. They're attacking our religion.

And so they began to chant, Great is Diana of Ephesians. Trying to overcome Jesus Christ. And the whole city was filled with confusion.

And having caught Gaius and Aristarchus, the men of Macedonia, Paul's companions in travel, they rushed with one accord into the theater. Man, here comes the whole mob. Paul's probably thinking, Great, I'm going to have a captive crowd here.

They think they're going to beat me to death. I'm going to preach before they kill me. I'm going to have 20,000, 30,000 people.

When Paul would have entered in unto the people, the disciples suffered a knot. And certain of the chief of Asia, which were his friends, sent unto him desiring him that he would not adventure himself into the theater. Some therefore cried one thing, some another, for the assembly was confused.

You get 20,000 people. Or feeper. People, you know, that are deeply religious and angry.

Can you imagine the chaos and the confusion? For the more part knew not wherefore they were come together. You know, when you get a crowd of people rushing down the street and pretty soon the crowd's growing, all they see, hey, it's a chance to throw a rock through a window. It's a chance to just rob a store.

Burn it. Set it on fire. Grab a TV.

There's something going on here. Somebody's angry. Let's get in the crowd.

Human nature hasn't changed, has it? And some of the people don't even know why they came together. It's a chance to vent and scream and hate the government. And they drew Alexander out of the multitude, the Jews putting him forward, and Alexander beckoned with a hand and would have made his defense unto the people.

But when they knew that he was a Jew, all with one voice about the space of two hours, cried out, Great is Diana the Ephesian. So they start chanting again, crying out, how great Diana the Ephesians are. Or is.

And when the town clerk had appeased the people, he said, You men of Ephesus. Now here's the thing that's so remarkable. You men of Ephesus, what man is there that knoweth not how that the city of the Ephesians is a worshiper of the great goddess Diana and of the image which fell down from Jupiter? What deception.

How Satan could deceive. When you look at the skill and the scientific technology and what these people could do and yet what dupes they are when it comes to religion. See, it doesn't matter what the IQ is, Satan can deceive a person so easily when they don't know the truth.

It's amazing the stupid things that intelligent people do when they don't know the truth. Seeing then that these things cannot be spoken against, you ought to be quiet and do nothing rashly. For you have brought hither these men, which are neither robbers of churches... Now notice the example of the apostles.

They didn't create a picket. They didn't go into town with placards attacking Diana, calling everybody heretics. They taught the truth.

They used Scripture to show it's idolatry and perfect love. They did not create an uproar and march outside or stand outside the temple of Diana. On one side of the street screaming and yelling that they were all idolaters and pagans.

And their character, knowing Jesus Christ in the way that they did, shared Christ in such a way, you see that people are responding. And look what the local authorities had to say. These men neither robbed churches nor were blasphemers of your goddess.

They did not attack Diana. They didn't rant and rave as a group outside the temple and try to win people to Christ that way. And the town clerk, who, you see, was ruling over it because of Rome, it was a Roman province, quelled the riot and said, you know, this can't go on.

These men are being falsely accused. And remember, he had to worry. Rome was tolerant of anything but riot and civil unrest.

And so he had to quell this confusion, this riot quickly. He said, you have no right. These men have not done what you're saying.

And there again, you see, they didn't condemn the worshippers of Ephesus. They proclaimed the truth. They didn't attack, but they spoke the truth in love.

They said, you're in idolatry. You say you worship God? Well, this is what God's Word says. True worship is.

And so then these people were making decisions and meeting the true and living God, and they didn't need those things anymore. They were making their own choices. The apostles were not attacking.

They did not blaspheme the goddess Diana. They proclaimed the truth. They lived the truth.

And by their actions and their character, you see, that's what won people over. And as Peter said, they were ready to give an answer if there was a question. Wherefore, if Demetrius and the craftsmen which are with him have a matter against any man, the law is open, and there are deputies.

Let them implead one another. But if you inquire anything concerning other matters, it shall be determined in a lawful assembly, for we are in danger to be called into question for this day's uproar, there being no cause whereby we may give account of this concourse. The things that you're trying to do to these men are false.

They have not robbed your churches, your temples. They haven't desecrated or defamed the buildings in any way. And they have not blasphemed your religion.

You see, the thing to do is to know the truth so well that people see it. To know the truth concerning Jesus Christ to such a degree and have a relationship with Jesus Christ to such a degree that people say, I want what you want or what you have. I see it in your life.

The problem is, you see, too many people hear someone say they're a Christian and don't see anything in their life that's different from their own. So there's nothing worth going after. They look at maybe the sticker on our car.

They may hear us say something nasty about a cult or attack someone's pagan belief, but they look at our lives because they work with us, they live with us, and they don't see it. They don't see anything desirous. They hear what we say with our mouths.

They hear the jokes we tell, what we laugh at at the water cooler, like everybody else at the office. They see what we do on the weekends, the places we go, the way we act, and they say, they're no different than us. Why should we change our religion? In fact, he smokes the same brand I do, drinks the same beer I drink.

But see, with these people, they saw something. There was something there, you see. And when he had thus spoken, he dismissed the assembly.

You see, if we live the light, Jesus said, let your light so shine that people might see your good works and glorify your Father which is in heaven. The only thing that stops my light from shining is that I'm a dirty reflector. There's no light to see.

There's dirt on the reflector. All we have to do is reflect it. People say, wow, I see the way to go.

I want that. Not condemning and attacking, but just proclaiming it and living it in such a way to say, you have something I don't have, and I know when I'm around you, what is it I want? It's the way. It's not religion.

The question comes up, what religion are you? What denomination are you? I'm not. I'm following the way, Jesus Christ. Now, again, why is God so concerned about idolatry? Let's just close with this.

Turn to Revelation chapter 13. Do you realize that Satan has billions of people in the palm of his hand right now conditioning them for the Antichrist? Do you realize that this country now, right now the United States, is ready to accept a dictator? That there is a man in Washington that is defying our Constitution, thumbing his nose at the very people who voted him into office, lying, and has a group of men around him that almost laugh at our Constitution. And people don't care because of the economy.

And this is supposed to be the Christian nation. Satan has this nation and the rest of the world in the palm of his hand for a dictator. They don't care what immorality is.

I don't care what the Constitution says. Leave the poor guy alone. The economy's good.

That's a dictatorship. That's people saying, we don't care who it is. We'll submit to him.

I can buy the extra car. Now, this is a Christian nation, supposedly, that should know better. Stop and think of the pagan nations around the world who are praying to trees, rocks, being swept up into the New Age, being prepared and conditioned for the Antichrist.

If this nation is in the palm of Satan's hand, what about the third world? Now, why is God so concerned? Because look what's going to take place at the end. Look at Revelation 13, verse 14, speaking of the beast. Now, remember, because the Bible refers to it as beast or creature, we think of something ugly and grotesque.

Remember, this beast is the false Christ. He's going to claim to be Jesus. The beast is going to claim to be Jesus, and he's going to make an image of himself.

And he deceived them that dwell on the earth by the means of miracles, verse 14, the false prophet, which he had power to do in the sight of the beast, saying to them that dwell on the earth that they should make an image to the beast. In other words, a statue to the one who calls himself Jesus, the Antichrist, which had the wound by a sword and did live, a miraculous resurrection from the dead. And he had power to give life under the image of the beast.

The statue that is called Jesus will speak. Now, let me tell you again, if there are millions of people in this nation that are overwhelmed when an image in Pittsburgh in a Catholic church of Jesus or Mary has a tear go down the cheek and it makes CNN and reporters drive all over the country and people by the thousands flock to see the statue bleed of Jesus, wait until the statue of Jesus speaks because the Bible says it's going to take place at the end. Why do you think God is warning people? Why do you think John, after his magnificent epistle of five chapters, ends it by saying, my little children, keep yourself from idols? It's for our own good.

And millions are being conditioned. They're worshiping already before images and statues violating Scripture. They have things in their homes.

Well, I don't pray to it. Wait until it calls your name. What would that do to you psychologically? You say, well, that won't affect me.

Uh-huh. It doesn't even speak and you can't let go of it. You say it won't do anything to you.

It doesn't even speak now and you can't let go of it. He had the power to give unto the image of the beast that the image of the beast should both speak and cause that as many as would not worship the image of the beast should be killed. And it's so satanically powerful and deceptive, he'll cause people to receive a mark in their hand and not use a credit card anymore to buy or sell.

And that technology is right at the doorstep. I'll stop and think how close the coming of the Lord is for the church. If that technology is at the doorstep, and this takes place in the middle of the Great Tribulation, three and a half years after the rapture, look how close we are.

And I'm going to say, and you can call me false and leave the church, but I'm going to tell you right now, I can predict more than likely, within less than a year, you're going to hear of a new breakthrough in technology that pretty soon they're going to start saying no more credit cards. We've designed a system that we can put the number on your skin. It won't harm you.

It'll be invisible. You don't have to worry about remembering your Social Security. You won't have to worry about your driver's license, your phone number, your computers.

Everything's right in your number. In a worldwide system, buy and sell, travel, airlines, everything's quicker, no trouble. Just run your hand under a scanner.

Mark my words. In less than a year, we'll probably hear of a new technological breakthrough. Turn to verse 9 of chapter 14.

And here again is the love of God for the world, warning, saying don't allow yourself to be caught up and open to this deception. Why? Verse 9 of Revelation 14. The third angel followed them, saying with a loud voice, if any man worship the beast, that's the living Antichrist, and his image.

You see, there are people that bow down. You look at the animus in the third world, the people that are really ignorant and really trapped by Satan, they'll kneel before a statue and pray to it, trying to reach their God through the image. And so God knows that.

So he's warning the church, if any man worship the beast, who is going to call himself Jesus, will be the Antichrist, and his image, and receive his mark in his forehead or in his hand, the same shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out without mixture under the cup of his indignation. And he shall be tormented with fire and brimstone, and the presence of the holy angels, and the presence of the lamb, and the smoke of their torment ascendeth up forever and ever. They have no rest day nor night, who worship the beast and his image, and whosoever receiveth the mark of his name.

The human race is being conditioned right now to be swept into the last great lie of the false Jesus. Isn't it wonderful to know the truth? And as Jesus said, the truth will make you free. And Jesus said, I am the way, the truth, and the life.

I think it's important that you know the Bible, because you can never get caught off guard. The discernment is wonderful. And all you have to do is hear one little blurb on television, or a little article on the eighth page of the paper, maybe a paragraph, and you see prophecy.

It's closer, and half the church isn't even aware of it. Or, they're so afraid of what their family will think, the fear of man has made them a snare, and they're afraid to make the right decision, as God wants them to. And so they open themselves up to delusion.

Don't let that happen to you. Jesus loves us so much that he's done everything he can to protect us, to protect you, to keep you from deception. Fall more in love with Jesus.

Don't be deceived. It's in him that we move. We live, we move, we have our being.

There's nothing greater, nothing safer than putting your trust in the way, that way. And sure, it may cause a ruckus. Praise God.

Because, you see, when the government began to give the church an easy way, the church began to cool down. There's a danger in having it too easy. It's amazing how people cool off when things are easy.

It's the fire of trial, and the persecution, the strain of the battle, that keeps us being purified by the Spirit of God, and keeps us sharp and alert, and sober, and strengthened by Jesus Christ himself, because he says, I'm not going to let anything happen to you. Shall we stand? Lord, we thank you that you are willing

to take these clay pots, especially my pot, Lord, after all these years. It's really starting to show.

And you'd consider that a shrine for your presence. And you're not impressed with the most skilled artisan, whether it be gold, or silver, or platinum, or whatever, that you don't dwell in things that are made with hands. And you don't honor little statues and images, no matter how beautiful they are.

And even if they represent you, Lord, you are telling us to repent, and to learn to worship you in spirit, and in truth, that you might reward us with more of your presence, and a personal everyday experience. Jesus, we love you so much. And we stand before you tonight, Lord, and ask you to strengthen us, Lord, to open our ears, that we really begin to hear you, as you want to lead us, and guide us, and protect us, in your love, in your truth, and in your way.

In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

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