

# Church History - Session 9 (The Book of Revelation)

by Edgar F. Parkyns

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*The Book of Revelation is a revelation of Jesus Christ to his church, guiding her through dark history and revealing the true nature of the church and the end times.*

**Duration:** 47:28

**Scripture:** Revelation 14:7-17

**Topics:** "Church History", "Book Of Revelation"

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## Description

In this sermon, the speaker discusses the teachings of John Wesley and how they are not fully represented by the Methodists. However, there are still many who understand and follow Wesley's teachings. The sermon then delves into the book of Revelation, specifically focusing on the last three angels mentioned in chapter 14. The speaker describes a vision of Jesus sitting on a white cloud with a golden crown and a sharp sickle, ready to reap the harvest of the earth. The sermon concludes with a mention of the upcoming discussion on the seven vials and a brief mention of the history of 20th century moves of God.

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## Transcript

We have been looking at the book of Revelation as the reformers understood it. Or those martyrs whom we mentioned just now understood the book of Revelation in the way that we have been sharing together. That is, that the book is what it claims to be a revelation of Jesus Christ to his church and concerning his church with visions written in sign language to show the things which should shortly come to pass but yet which would lead up to his second coming.

All those points are uncontrovertibly set forth in the book and any exposition which ignores those points laid down so straightly by the Lord Jesus however fascinating it may sound, is bound to be wrong and will involve increasing distortions of scripture to make a consecutive scheme. And so the book of Revelation is a revelation of Jesus Christ to his church to help her in her dark history, guiding her through her troubles, written in sign language. He sent and signified it by his angel who was servant John.

It would have a message for the early church who received it through its vision as we have seen. It would have a message for the church in her dark hours of need and it will have a message for us in our day. These are basic principles.

It was so written that those who first read it could conceive the church age as belonging to one generation. Yet it was also so written that it could apply to the long extended centuries of the Christian era. We living at the end of 19 centuries may rightly examine history to see if there is a correspondence between what is written in the book and what has been happening in the history of the Christian testimony.

Our studies have brought us to the end of chapter 13 and we are going to have a look at the next section, chapter 14, to the end. But I find that very early in chapter 14 we come across the mention of Babylon. Verse 8, and there follows another angel saying, Babylon is fallen, is fallen, that great city, because she made all nations drink of the wine of the wrath of her fornication.

So it will be well if we will look into the book of Revelation and see what it tells us about Babylon, that great city. There are two passages in Revelation which are disarmingly in contrast. The one is Revelation 17 and the other is Revelation 21, verse 9 to verse 22.

Now, can you open your Bible to both of those places? Revelation 17, verse 1, and Revelation 21, verse 9. 17, verse 1, and 21, verse 9. Get both places available and have a look. I'm going to read a little bit of the first sentence. And there came one of the seven angels which had the seven vials.

That's from 17, 1. And in 21, 9. There came unto me one of the seven angels which had the seven vials, full of the seven last plagues. In 17, 1. Saying unto me, Come hither, and I will show thee. In Revelation 21.

And talked with me, saying, Come hither, and I will show thee. You notice the exact parallel pattern there. In Revelation 21, verse 9. Come hither, and I will show thee the bride, the Lamb's wife.

In Revelation 17, 1. I will show thee the judgment of the great whore. And as you look down in Revelation 17, verse 1. You'll find the great whore is Mystery Babylon the Great. And you'll find that the bride, the Lamb's wife.

Is that, verse 10, that great city, the Holy Jerusalem. So you see, there is a designed pattern and a designed contrast. The introduction is almost word for word the same.

The event of the angel making the revelation is the same. In each case, there is a woman who is a city. And we will stop and have a look at Revelation 21, and verse 10.

And you will see that the bride and the city are one. I will show you the bride, and he shows a great city. Once again, a demonstration that Revelation is a book of symbols.

Because you wouldn't like to have a city for a bride. She wouldn't be at all comfortable to live with. This is a book of symbols.

And that wonderful city, the perfected church, the Holy Jerusalem. Has the glory of God, her life likened to a stone, most precious. A jasper stone, clear as crystal.

She has a wall, great and high, to keep out evil. Twelve gates, and at the gates, twelve angels with names written thereon. Which are the names of the twelve tribes, the children of Israel.

There they are sorted out. Remember that in the old days, to belong to the elect, you had to be one of the twelve tribes, didn't you? But in this New Jerusalem, the gates of election are open day and night. Look at this, verse 25.

And the gates of it shall not be shut at all by day, for there shall be no night there. The gates of this city, the gates of election, are wide open. It's marked with the number 144,000, 12,000, 12,144 rather.

It's garnished with precious stones. The Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are the temple of it. The city has no need of the sun.

The glory of God did lighten it. And the Lamb is the light thereof. Isn't it interesting that the features John sees in this eternal city, this perfectly bright, are the features that mark our testimony down here now.

The Lamb is the light. That's where I find the church. That's what marks out the church.

The Lamb is the light of it. Isn't that right? And you get a community who don't know the light of the Lamb. There's no church there.

They may have a spire, they may have an altar, they may have choir investments, parsonage and congregation and service. But unless the Lamb is the light, there's no church. But the Lamb is the light.

The masons which are saved walk in the light of it. There shall in no wise enter into it in that glorified state anything that defiled it, neither whatsoever work of abomination or make of the lie, but they which are written in the Lamb's book of life. But now then, come back then to the other.

Here, chapter 17, is a woman, but instead of being a pure and holy bride, she is a great whore that sits upon many waters. She has committed fornication with the kings of the earth. She too is clothed, but clothed in scarlet, in purple and scarlet, and decked with gold and precious stones and pearls.

Having a golden cup in her hand full of abominations and filthiness of her fornication. She is drunken with the blood of the saints, with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus. And when I saw her, I wondered with great admiration.

Now, isn't it plain that if the woman and city of chapter 21 is a picture of the true, pure church of the elect, that this woman is obviously a picture of a false church, which has much outward glory, but lacks the reality of election. The contrast is most deliberate. She is sitting upon a scarlet covered beast, full of names of blasphemy, having seven heads and ten horns.

We've seen this. It is Europe after the Roman Empire broke up, and Europe broke up into its ten kingdoms. Is there then a church which has sat comfortably over the ten kingdoms of Europe during the Christian era? Yes, indeed.

Have they voluntarily submitted to her? Yes, indeed. Is she drunk with the blood of the saints? Yes, indeed. The beast is identified, and the woman is identified.

Here is the mind that hath wisdom. Verse 9, the seven heads are the seven mountains on which the woman sitteth. Even Roman Catholic expologists confess that this is the identification of Rome.

Rome is her name, Rome her location. We saw how the seven governments of Rome had fallen in succession and were replaced by the eighth ecclesiastical government, the first eleven. We saw how Europe, at the fall of the seventh head of the Christian emperors, broke up into ten kingdoms, and how those ten kingdoms gave their power voluntarily to the beast and to the woman who rides the beast.

Isn't that an amazing political cartoon? My, the finest cartoons in the world couldn't have thought of putting a picture of the history of Europe in such neat, concise terms as this chapter. The waters which thou sawest, once again notice the language of symbolism, are people and multitudes, nations and tongues. And the ten horns which thou sawest upon the beast, she was riding the beast, and the ten kingdoms were giving their power to her, the ten horns shall hate the whore and make her desolate and naked and shall eat her flesh and burn her with fire.

For God hath put in their hearts to fulfil his will and to agree and give their kingdom unto the beast until the words of God shall be fulfilled. And the woman which thou sawest is that great city, another mark showing plainly, the only great city which John knew of this description, which reigneth over the kings of the earth, Rome. So here it is, the stamp of identity is upon this church.

The stamp of the seven hills, the stamp of the great city which rules over the kingdoms of the earth at John's time. So there it is, very, very plainly marked. The ten horns receive power as kings one hour with the beast.

Well, obviously not a literal hour, is it? It would be the good of getting ten kings together to reign for sixty minutes. That would be quite ridiculous. Obviously then, not a literal hour.

But you remember how Jesus uses the word hour. He says, the hour cometh and now is when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God and they that hear shall live. Referring to the gospel hour.

The hour which had begun then and continues to this day. Thank God you are some of the resurrection people who have heard his voice and lived in the gospel hour. So here they are, receiving power and giving this as kings in the one hour with the beast.

They have one mind and give their power and strength unto the beast. The most striking demonstration of that, of course, was the crusades. The Pope could turn the armies of Europe against anyone he will.

Against the Christian Eldegenses of Southern France, against the Saracens in the Holy Land, against the Turks, against the citizens of Constantinople. He could turn them any way he wanted to. But the beast wasn't always in agreement with what he wanted.

We saw that picture in Daniel where the union of the kingdom, part iron and part of clay, is sometimes strong, sometimes weak. The ten horns hate the whore and make her desolate. After a thousand years, they began to turn.

At the time of the Reformation, Britain turned. Soon afterwards, Holland turned. Parts of Germany turned.

In the French Revolution, almost every nation in Europe overthrew the dominion of the Roman Catholic Church. Jesuits were turned out of every country. The Pope was made a prisoner by Napoleon.

It looked as though the end of the Church had come. But the great whore said, Behold, I sit as a queen and shall see no sorrow. And she made a recovery.

But she was never the same again. Lost most of her political power. And after many disturbances, wars on the continent, in 1870 came the Vatican Council.

The Great Council of 1870. They decreed the papal infallibility. And in the same year, the Pope lost all his possessions.

He ceased to be a king. And from then on became a voluntary prisoner in the Vatican until 1929. Remaining shut up.

So, the ten kings have turned against that woman that had ridden them so long. And they're still turning against. In Spain, Spain is in a ferment now.

The woman is losing her seat in Spain. Atheism and Communism are overthrowing the old systems. Similar things are beginning to happen even in the Americas.

Where there is unrest, both gospel unrest and communistic unrest. The old order of the past is being broken up. The ten horns are turning against the woman that rides the beast.

So, here I think we have the clearest identifications. The city is marked as Rome. The position of the woman as riding the European beast with its ten heads.

Ten horns, rather. The mark of the Seven Hills City. The city which reigns over the kings of the earth.

And the tragic fulfillment of the scripture indictment in her long history of persecution. And it is set out before us. Well, you may look at that at your leisure and see how it all works out.

Come back to chapter 14. Now, we've got Babylon more or less described. And fitted into her place in the history of church.

Incidentally, I have two history books. Well, three really. Two that I'm consulting which are quite accepted history books.

Neither of them mention the things I'm telling you about the identification of Antichrist. Carefully expunged, as it is from nearly all history books these days. And neither of them mention the Pentecostal or the charismatic movements.

It's also quite interesting. Surprising how blind you can be when you want to be. They mention the Mormons, the Mennonites, the Seventh-day Adventists, the Russellites.

But not the charismatic sort of Pentecostals. They don't exist. Can't see them.

That's the nature of history. Revelation 14, 144 upon Mount Zion. Where in the previous chapter we had looked at the lamb-like beast which spoke like a dragon.

Imitating Christ, but not his true representative. But here we see the true lamb. Chapter 14, verse 1. I looked.

Heavenly vision. And the lamb stood on Mount Zion. With him 140 and 4,000.

Having his father's name written in their foreheads. I heard a voice from heaven. Written.

Not with a laser beam. And I heard a voice from heaven. As the voice of many waters.

As the voice of great thunder. And I heard the voice of harpers. Harping with their harps.

And they sung as it were a new song before the throne. And before the four beasts and the elders. And no man could learn that song but the 144,000 which were redeemed from the earth.

These are they which are not defiled with women, for they are virgins. These are they which follow the Lamb with us wherever he goeth. These were redeemed from among men.

Being the firstfruits unto God and to the Lamb. And in their mouth is found no guile. They are without fault before the throne of God.

They are redeemed. They are virgins in this sense. Paul says, I have espoused you as a chaste virgin unto Christ.

Don't jump into literalism in the middle of a book of symbols. Use the scripture to give you understanding. I have espoused you as a chaste virgin to Christ.

They are not defiled with women. John is a true believer with brother James. Who informs us that marriage is honorable in all and the bed undefiled.

So don't get all mixed up with queer ideas about celibacy. In this verse it has nothing to do with it. It is once again symbolic language for true purity.

And in their mouth was found no guile. You know Psalm 32. Blessed is the man whose iniquities are forgiven and whose sins are covered.

Blessed is the man to whom the Lord imputed not iniquity. And in whose spirit there is no guile. That is, he's owned up.

He's been honest before God. He's yielded to the convictions of the Holy Ghost. He's cried with the utmost heart-searching, God be merciful to me the sinner.

There's no guile. And these are like that. They are redeemed.

Being the first fruits unto God and to the land. Now, one naturally asks, are they the same company as in chapter 7? And once again one asks, does the symbol 144,000 limit itself to the elect of the tribes of Israel? Or can it possibly include the elect of the whole church which is, as Paul says, the Israel of God. I can't give you a final answer on many of these questions.

But I would say that this vision seems to indicate a wider interpretation than that of chapter 7. Now we're moving on. The era of the dominion of the beast is slipping away and another era is coming in. Verse 6. I saw another angel fly in the midst of heaven having the everlasting good news to preach unto them that dwell on the earth and to every nation and kindred and tongue and people.

And he said something to fear God and give glory to him for the hour of his judgment has come and worship him that made heaven and earth and the sea and the fountains of waters. I'm sure that you know your Bible well enough to know that the saying of verse 7 is not the everlasting gospel. There's only one everlasting gospel.

It's the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ. Only one. Get that clear.

It's the one which is echoed right through revelation concerning the land who has redeemed us to God by his blood. Only one everlasting gospel. But the angel who was carrying the everlasting gospel also brought a warning of coming judgment.

Now note that. Was there something in history to correspond to this after the power of the dark ages had been broken by the Reformation? Yes, we've been looking at it. A new generation of gospel preachers arose with the everlasting gospel and also with a warning of judgment to come such as the world hadn't known for a thousand years.

The message of the angel is an exact picture of what has been going on in the church in the last two centuries. The proclamation of the everlasting gospel with renewed clarity and a declaration of the judgment to come and the warning to fear God. And you will know as you have read some of the history of the revivals of the last two centuries how the warnings of the judgment of God have been closely associated with the proclamation of the gospel.

Isn't that true now? You've read of Jonathan Edwards. You've read how people in his great revivals are said to have clung to the pillars of the church when Jonathan was merely reading his written sermon by lantern light in that darkened church. They cried out for mercy, clung to the pillars, thought they were being drawn down quick into hell.

And thank God for this. It awakened the earth, the world to a new sense of righteousness and judgment. Closely following this revival of gospel preaching comes an announcement, Babylon is fallen! That great city, because she made all nations drink of the wine of the wrath of her fornication.

In all the literature of this tremendous period you will find echoes of this announcement. Even if you read John Bunyan, do you know how he describes the Pope? He says, Old Antichrist, I saw, sitting at the mouth of his cave, biting his fingernails because he no longer has power to persecute pilgrims. You can read that in John Bunyan's Pilgrim's Progress, worth reading.

So there it is. Closely following and associated with the preaching of the gospel is the warning to fear God and the awareness that Babylon is fallen. But still, because the falling isn't complete, there's still a warning, verse 9, about going on under that system.

Terrible and strong warning. Verse 12, I think probably belongs to the next verse, 12 and 13. Here is the patience of the saints, here are they that keep the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus.

And I heard a voice from heaven saying unto me, Write, Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth. Yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labours, and their works do follow them. Now that's a strange thing to introduce in Revelation chapter 14 after all that's gone before, isn't it? But if you will look at what has gone before, you will see that Paul's mighty ministry, for instance, he knew would be quickly clouded over by apostasy.

John knew that the blessings which he saw would be eclipsed by the growth of Antichrist within the church. All the great men of God of those early generations knew that apostasy was going to overtake and all but destroy the grand work which they had done. But from the Reformation onwards, if we are right in interpreting Revelation in this way, something new has happened.

Those who die in the Lord since that day are not eclipsed. Their works follow them. Luther, Wesley, Finney.

Oh, what a blessed day we're living in. These men are leaving their mark on the generations that follow them. Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord from henceforth.

So different from the earlier history where everything seemed to be going down into disruption and darkness. Now, in these last three or four centuries, blessed are the dead that die in the Lord that they may rest from their labors and their works do follow them. And even though Wesley is not perfectly represented by the Methodists, nevertheless there are more who understand what Wesley taught on earth today than ever there were in his lifetime.

And more who truly know Christ as he knew him. Praise God. Their works follow them.

Tremendous day. There are seven angels in this chapter, I think. The number four being the voice in verse 13.

But now let us have a look at the last three angels. I looked, and behold a white cloud, and upon the cloud one sat like unto the Son of Man, having on his head a golden crown, and in his hand a sharp sickle. Jesus moving into action in the heavenlies, and another angel came out of the temple, crying with a loud voice to him that sat on the cloud, Thrust in thy sickle and reap, for the time is come for thee to reap, for the harvest of the earth is ripe.

What music! What music! We've seen all this suffering, distortion, darkness, we've heard new declarations of hope, new evidences of recovery, and now Jesus moving into action in the heavenlies, taking a great sickle, a gospel sickle surely, to send forth labourers into the harvest, for the fields are white already unto harvest. A vision of the great worldwide missionary movement, which began in the late 1700s, developed through the 1800s, and is moving now, as thousands and millions from the four corners of the earth are falling to the gospel sickle. Thrust in thy sickle, O Jesus, and reap, for the harvest of the earth is ripe.

I tell you it's a thrill to be on the mission field today. I sent out, at least I didn't exactly send out, but I didn't discourage a young couple from going out to Nigeria, and they arrived there under extremely difficult circumstances at the beginning of this year. And the culture shock was so great, I couldn't spare them anything, unfortunately their circumstances were strange.

The culture shock was so great that the poor girl wept for weeks at the continual strain of the thing. But now they're getting the victory, and now they're settling in to teach young men who'll be going out to reap the harvest fields. Oh, I'm tired of telling you how many churches we've got out there.

I do know I started with a handful, and there are now over 300. The harvest is ripe, and I'm dealing with two rival evangelists, and they're both sickles in the Lord's hands. And rather like Wesleyan's top lady, although they're both doing the Lord's work, they don't exactly agree with each other, but I'm friendly with them both.

But they're both sickles in the Lord's hand, and he is using them to reap the thousands upon thousands in West Africa. And thank God the work is spreading so fast that it looks as though the whole of tropical Africa will be reached with a new wave of the gospel in the next couple of years or so. It's tremendous.

Hallelujah. Trust in the sickle, Lord, and reap. The harvest of the earth is ripe.

History is being made, not repeated. There's a more tremendous outreach in the gospel now than ever has been. We're living in the most exciting times in the history of the world.

See it. It's not the organization of man. It's not the so-and-so missionary society doing it.

They're pretty well helped. The more they try to preserve themselves, the more they destroy themselves. But the Lord on the clouds is in charge.

He's doing it. He's sending his men. Why, Timothy Eander, to whom I've just been writing, was a little trader, a little fellow trader in Baden City.

And when he was down at Lagos, he heard a four-square missionary preaching and he was showing a gospel film. And Timothy's heart was touched and he found Christ. And he went home and instead of joining one of the big churches, he did nothing but read his Yoruba Bible right through the New Testament, drinking it in for three months.

And then the Lord called him to preach. And I met Timothy not long after up in Elisha. And he told me his story.

And he said he couldn't get rid of the goods in his shop. When he tried to sell them at cross price, nobody would believe him. And he had to end up by giving them all away.

So he gave me a flat iron, which wouldn't work, but never mind. And I gave him a little bit of money, which he gave away before he left Elisha to somebody else. And away he went on his first adventure for Christ.

My, now he's gathering crowds of ten thousand. Praise the Lord. Preaching with great power and with signs following.

In Dahomey, in Nigeria, in Cameroons. Going far and wide with the gospel. One of God's sickles reaping the harvest.

Incidentally, a sickle is an interesting tool, isn't it? It has a blade and a handle. The blade has to be as sharp as possible, and the handle has to be as smooth as possible. The blade is to cut with, the handle is to be held.

And the blade has a sort of extension which goes deep into the heart of the wood. And when the two are bound together, the sharp blade and the smooth handle, there's a sickle. Rightly shaped.

The Lord found us, didn't he? Misshapen old pieces of timber. And he's been cutting us down to shape. And he's been setting his word into our heart.

And binding the two together. That we might be an instrument shaped with his hand. And able to reap the end time harvest.

Praise the Lord. And when I think of Timothy or Benson or Julius or any of my African friends, I think of them like that. Sickles in the Lord's hands.

Reaping the Lord's end time harvest. What exciting days we're in. I tell you, there never has been a day like this.

And I believe that's foretold in this vision. We've seen that every vision in Revelation has found its answer in history. And I think we're living in the answer to that one.

But next. Verse 18. Another angel came out from the altar which had power over fire.

And cried with a loud cry to him that had the sharp sickle, saying Trust in thy sharp sickle and gather the clusters of the vine of the earth for her grapes are fully ripe. And the angel thrust in his sickle into the earth and gathered the vine of the earth and cast it into the great winepress of the wrath of God. And the winepress was trodden without the city.

And blood came out of the winepress even to the horse bridles by the faith of a thousand six hundred furlongs. There's another harvest on the way and it's being prepared for. It's not a harvest of souls but a harvest of blood and of judgment.

And all over the earth, as everybody knows the weapons are being prepared for that harvest. Already weapons are stockpiled, they say which could destroy the earth five times over. There's another harvest on the way.

The night cometh when no man can work. Suddenly, without warning that day of unparalleled destruction will burst upon the earth and the day of reaping will be over. Jesus wrote this, didn't he, to warn his church.

Isn't this what he's telling us in our day? As he warned earlier generations about the deceptions that would overtake them. So doesn't he warn us now in this day of gospel release when the gospel is going all over the world when missionary outreach is taken on new and heavenly aspects such as it has never had before. Is he not warning us that before long there will come the voice of the final angel of that series announcing the judgments of unparalleled and probably atomic warfare.

We're living very, very near to that day. We cannot afford although the temptation is strong we cannot afford to be overcome with surfeiting. Remember how Jesus warned of that danger in the last day.

He said, beware lest you be overcome with surfeiting. Surfeiting is not the same thing as drunkenness. Surfeiting is what happens to people who have more than the necessary income.

Beware lest any of you be overcome with surfeiting and that day overtake you unawares. I wonder where it is. Let's see if we can find it.

Luke 21, 34 Take heed yourselves, lest at any time your heart be overcharged with surfeiting and drunkenness and the cares of this life so that that day come upon you unawares for as a smear shall it come on all them that dwell on the face of the whole earth. Surfeiting is at the head of the list and that means having too much of good things. No, sometimes they go back over the ground again.

Well, we're in it. We're in it all right. It's really going ahead.

That great missionary revival is on. We're in it. The last part is, we've had a little taste of it in two world wars but the real fullness is on its way later.

Probably, and I'll tell you why. Revelation 19, verse 15 The vision of the coming of Christ in judgment. 19, verse 15 Out of his mouth goeth a sharp sword that with it he should smite the nations.

He shall rule them with a rod of iron and he treads the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of almighty God. And with the mention of the winepress it's probable that they are two parallel passages and not the second coming. But when he returns it will be following a very traumatic period on earth.

Yes. But the traumatic period will probably be so sudden that there will be scarcely time to adjust to it. Yes.

There's no indication in any way that he's going to take her out of it. He might. I mean to say with God nothing is impossible but I don't think there's an indication here, if you will.

More questions? All right. Well, it's given us a breathing space, hasn't it? We don't know how long for. I think certainly Israel's heath beside relief I think the Egyptians did it because they weren't prepared for war, really.

They were bankrupt. And for the rest of us, too, my word. It's given us another week, maybe.

No, I don't mean that kind of week. I mean the ritual one. Well, I think that's about our time.

Next week I'll try and look at the seven vials which also cover much of the same period and we'll try and round up the book and also have a brief glance at the history of 20th century moves of God and then we'll be through and then a very short test. Thank you. The plot thickens, doesn't it? All right, let's stand and be dismissed.

Praise the Lord. Father, we thank you so much. Lord, that you do not leave us in darkness but that you bring us and open your light to us and that you light our pathway that we may walk in that pathway as the psalmist said.

Your word is a light, a lamp unto our pathway. And Father, we thank you for it. Now, Lord, just help us that we may retain this light and that it would become the guiding force of our lives and that we may be found watching, waiting for your return.

Now, Lord, thank you for this night. Thank you for each one that has come out. And bless them, Father, as we go.

Bless us, Father. In Jesus' precious name, amen. All right, tomorrow night in Hebrews.

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