

The Irreparable Fallen Condition of Man

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Grab your Bibles and let's go to Genesis. Genesis 1. Now we're in the third installment in our series entitled "The Unbreakable Eight-Strand Cable of Sovereign Grace." Sovereign grace. We are saved by grace and our God is sovereign so we use the phrase his sovereign grace that saves us, and there are eight components, I call them eight strands in this massive unbreakable cable of grace that God has extended to us.

Now we've already seen the center-most strand and that's the most important. All the other strands wrap around the center and the center-most strand was God's great love or God's great glory, rather, that God is all encompassed with, manifesting, making great his glory. Then we talked about God's invincible love. We looked at how God's love is magnanimous beyond all compare and his great love for all mankind is beyond our comprehension. We talked about how he has an even greater, more glorious love for his children. He calls them sometimes the called or the chosen or the elect or the predestined, or from the human perspective, those who believe on Jesus Christ. No one believes, at least no one who has any element of orthodox biblical doctrine in them, nobody believes that God's love extends for all men forever. The men who perish without Christ, God's love for them ceases. He will not be manifesting his love for them, they'll be in eternal torment in a hell, a place of punishment justly deserved for their sin and their lack of believing on Christ. So there is going to be a special love of God for his children and that's enacted now and it's in full force now for all of us and it will last forever.

So God's great purpose of glory. In God extending sovereign grace, he had a purpose, he was accomplishing something that he might be glorified. Then this great invisible love God is showing to all mankind and especially to those who are his children. Now we come to the third installment that historically and traditionally this would be called total depravity. I'm not going to use that phrase specifically. Well, I might use it a time or two. There will be a lot of interchangeable phrases in this, but I call it the irreparable condition, this irreparable state that man is in. Man is fallen and he's in a place that he is beyond fixing apart from God.

Now let's begin with I: where it all began. "Pastor, if man is in this sinful, fallen, irreparable state, where did it all begin?" Well, let's look at it together as we look at the creation story and we'll just look at a few things here. Obviously I have to be very brief and can't do any thorough exposition of any text I'm going to look at today, there are way too many of them, but when God was creating man and woman, he said in Genesis 1:26

and 27, "Then God said, 'Let Us make man in Our image.'" Now first of all, when God said he's making man in his own image, that speaks of the dignity of mankind. There is a status. There is a sacredness, a dignity to humankind that God gave to none other of the created order. Now chief among the aspects of this high status and dignity is this truth: man has the capacity to know and treasure God. None of the other parts of creation can do that. They are not made capable of such but man is unique. Man is not just the highest form of evolution, he is a creation made with great sacred dignity by Almighty God.

Then God said, "Not only am I going to make you very special, very unique, I'm making man in my own image." Then he said in verse 26, "let them rule over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the sky and over the cattle and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth." So God said, "Not only do I give you a unique dignity, I give you a unique dominion." God gave man a dominion over the earth. Everything else is subject to man.

Isn't it amazing how our so-called progressive culture gets things upside down? We begin worshiping the creation. We begin putting things and things in the plant kingdom and things in the animal kingdom on some sort of par with human beings. That is wrong. God gave humans dominion. That's why moms and dads as we raise little boys, don't be afraid of a little boy playing war and fighting battles and things. Do you know what he's doing? He's doing what God programmed him to do. He wants a dominion. Now he can be sinful in that but there is a righteous dominion. Young men should try to build and accomplish and have their own place and have their own possessions because God has given man a dominion. Now he should be doing it for the glory of God, he should be honoring the Lord with it but that's a good thing. That's why men ought to go deer hunting because God has given men dominion. Now some of you are shaking your heads and some of you aren't because you don't have to hunt to exercise your dominion but that's one way I like to exercise my dominion. So God said, "I've given you a dignity and I've given you a unique role." You see, man is the tetrarch of earth. God is the monarch but we are the sub-regents, if you will, under God, and that's the way God ordained it to work.

Then look at the purity that man had in the beginning. Go over to Genesis 2 and look at verses 24 and 25, "For this reason a man shall leave his father and his mother, and be joined to his wife; and they shall become one flesh. And the man and his wife were both naked and were not ashamed." Originally man had a holy innocence. Originally man was upright. There was nothing to be ashamed of. He had no guilt at all and he enjoyed this great dignity and this wonderful dominion God gave him in the earth, but then something happened.

Look at Genesis 3. Adam and Eve sinned. They ate of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil that God forbid them to eat of. Then the Bible says in Genesis 3:7, "Then the eyes of both of them were opened, and they knew that they were naked." The innocence is gone. The holiness has been corrupted. Now shame enters in. Now guilt has occurred as man has now sinned and disobeyed God. He begins to lose his dignity, or at least it is marred and corrupted, and now the blessedness of his dominion, he still has dominion but the blessedness of it is now removed.

Look at verse 8, "They heard the sound of the LORD God walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and the man and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the LORD." Now that's right the opposite. God made man right the opposite of that. He made man to cling to God, to long for God, to look to God, to want the nearness of God, but it is sin now, the corruption of sin that's caused man to run from God.

Verse 9, what a penetrating statement this is, "Then the LORD God called to the man, and said to him, 'Where are you?'" Where are you? What's happened? And that's the question that's echoed down through the ages until our day today. Where's man? What condition is he in? Where is he going? Where was he in that place of dignity and where has he fallen from that place of blessed dominion? Where is man? In relation to God, where is he? We'll seek to answer that today.

Now go back to chapter 2, if you will, and God said, "This is what's going to happen if you disobey me and you dishonor me." Chapter 2, look at verse 16, "The LORD God commanded the man, saying, 'From any tree of the garden you may eat freely; but from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat from it you will surely die.'" Now you'll die in a number of ways but you will die. As a matter of fact, in Genesis 5:5, we have a word that appears in the Bible for the first time ever and we have an occurrence, a dreadful occurrence that occurs in the Bible for the first time ever. In Genesis 5:5 the Bible says, "And Adam died." Hadn't happened before but sin has entered now and it brought the curse with it and death is one of those curses, and now we have men dying all the way up to today's obituary column. Man has fallen, he has fallen into an irreparable state. He's died physically and you say, "Well, I'm not dead." Yeah, but the moment you were born, you started to die and you will one day die, barring the Lord's return beforehand. Man has died morally, he has died ethically, man has died to the place of dignity God gave him. No wonder people today are treating children and unborn babies like lesser than animals because we've lost the concept of the dignity of humankind. Man's died spiritually. He no longer longs for God. He no longer can bond with God and wickedness and evil fills the land. In Genesis 4, the Bible tells us about Cain, how he rises up in jealousy of his brother Abel. He rises up in envy and he murders his own brother and the Bible tells us then there becomes this domino effect down through the ages of jealousy and pride and hate and murder and vileness and ugliness and wickedness, and that continues on right up until today's news broadcast. Death has occurred in the human race. As the Bible says in 1 Corinthians 15:20, "For as in Adam, all die." In Adam, all die. We are born spiritually dead, we are not connected to God anymore, we don't desire him like we should have desired him, and we will certainly physically die and we will eternally die.

Now there's something that theologians call the federal headship of Adam and here's what that means: that means that we are guilty in father Adam. All of Adam's descendants, every single one who has ever been born is born into this earth guilty in Adam. You say, "Well, I don't know that that's quite fair." Yes, but the moment you come to the place where you understand good and bad, evil and righteousness, you've all chosen evil. You've all chosen wrong. As the psalmist said in Psalm 51:5, "I was brought forth in

iniquity and in sin my mother conceived me." He didn't mean, "My mother was involved in some sinful act," he means, "My very being was corrupted from the beginning. My very innermost part, I am a fallen being. I am the descendant of Adam and Eve who sinned and fell in the garden and they have passed on this guilt and they have passed on this irreparable condition, this depravity to all their descendants." So theologians, pastors, Bible teachers in general, have spoken of this fall of mankind but I don't know why exactly we use the word "fall." It kind of has the right picture because man literally didn't fall into sin, he jumped into it with both feet and he's still doing it today.

Well, that's where it all began. II in our outline: radical depravity 101. We're going to have a little theology class this morning. Radical depravity 101. Now I don't use the phrase total depravity because I think it emphasizes an aspect that doesn't mean the same the it meant back in the sixteenth century perhaps. R. C. Sproul likes the phrase radical corruption. I'm good with that too but if we want to talk about what does this all mean that man has fallen and he's in an irreparable state before a holy God, what does the Bible tell us about that? Well, here's what it means. First of all, A and the most important thing: it means man cannot find God. Now when we say radical depravity, we don't mean that man is as bad as he could be. That would be utter depravity. We don't mean that every human being lives out his depravity to the full extent. I mean, even Hitler as Dr. Sproul points out in his good messages on this subject, he says even Hitler could have done worse. We would assume Hitler did love his mom. The most vile and heinous evil men and women of history could even be worse. So radical depravity, it doesn't mean that all mankind though fallen and depraved are living out there depravity. Thank God for that, but what it does mean, it means that we are corrupted by sin at the moment of conception to the very core of our being. The innermost part of us has a pollution in it. It has a rottenness in it. It has a corruption in it that makes us, causes us to be in this state of unfixable. We can't mend ourselves. We cannot fix ourselves. Now man can perhaps contain some of the expressions of his sinful depravity. Thank God that most often you only hate in your heart, you don't go ahead and murder too. We can sometimes contain and that's a gift from God, but you can put a serial killer in prison and he can't kill anymore but you haven't changed his heart. So there is some corralling and containing but the central picture here or the central point here is the fact that man was made to connect with God and he has lost that in the fall.

On my farm every year there are some geese that raise their little ones there around the pond, and I enjoy watching them except that sometimes there gets to be too many of them, but nevertheless, in the springtime that mother goose will lay her eggs and we'll watch those eggs. They had some right there by the roadway and I would watch them and all of a sudden they were gone and I looked out over the pond and little bitty bitty baby geese, goslings they are called but we don't use that kind of language in Alabama, baby geese, and do you know what? Those baby geese couldn't have been a day or two old and I'm telling you, they were totally bonded to their mother. Where mama went, they went. Mama turned this way, they turned that way. Mama turned right, they turned. Mama turned left, they turned. I mean, you didn't have to teach them. The biologists, the wildlife biologist call that imprinting. Do you know that's the way man was originally created to be? God originally made you to have the imprinting of your God on your hearts and

minds. You were originally made to come forth from the womb and the first thought you had as a baby at whatever age that was would be, "I love my Creator. I want to go where he goes. I want to turn when he turns. I want to stop when he stops. I want to love what he loves." That should be the way it is but man has lost the imprinting aspect by relationship with God due to this fall. Now it's right the opposite, is it not? There is no natural love for God. When Jesus said in Mark 12:30, "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, all your soul, all your mind and all your strength," what he's saying is this is the way it ought to be. This is normal had sin and fallenness and depravity not come into the human race. Now to get there – listen, church – now to get even on the track of being that way takes a radical transformation. It's not natural anymore. Radical depravity.

Well, we don't know God, we don't come into this world naturally loving God, we do not come into this world naturally seeking after God, and then B subpoint here is: sin has corrupted all of man's faculties. When we talk about biblical depravity or radical depravity, we understand that sin didn't just affect one part of us, it affects all of us. This corruption has infected the totality of our human body, first of all. I'm 58 and I think I've got a lot of years left to serve the Lord but somehow I don't quite have the hours out in the sun working in the fields and stuff that I enjoyed doing like I used to have. We all grow weak in body and we all die. That's why when Genesis 5:5 mentions that word for the first time and that is the word "died," it's a radical unique thing for that time. Man wasn't made to die but because of sin our bodies show the depravity. Our bodies show we're in an irreparable state. Our bodies and our minds, our minds are dark at times. I've told you many times before if we could put on this screen up here everything that went through your mind this week, none of us would ever show our face in public again. Why are our minds like that? Then our minds grow weak as we grow older. They are not as sharp. They are not as alert. Dementia can set in. Why? Because we are affected by sin.

Our will is damaged. Oh, we don't have time to go into all of it now, we'll explore some of it more in this series but people argue today, "Well, does man have a free will?" Of course man has a free will. Absolutely man has a free will. Man's will is free within his nature. You see, a pig cannot will to be a horse. It's not his nature. And a cat cannot will to be a giraffe. It's just not in the nature. And a fallen man corrupted in sin cannot will the virtuous things of a holy God in his heart and life. Our will is corrupted. Why do you choose to do so many things that dishonor God and actually are hurtful to you? Because sin has corrupted all of our faculties. Our emotions, it should be that our emotions are turned to God, joy in God, treasure God, we weep over God, we laugh over God, but why is God such a small part of our emotional being? Because sin has corrupted our emotions. Our spirit is dead to God. Ephesians 2:1 reminds us and it's a continual tense verb there, that being dead in sin and you were in the state of being dead to God because of your sin. You are spiritually corrupted. The connection to God is gone and we've been talking about that.

C in our outline: the heart of the problem. The heart of the problem. As a matter fact, did you know in the ancient Greek the word "core" and the word "heart" have the same root and when the Bible talks about heart, it means your core being, and what the Bible says

when we have sinful hearts, it means we have a rottenness down to the core. Jesus said to these Pharisees in his day, these religious legalists, they were always putting on these external observances, they were always putting on an outward work or a ritual, and they said, "That makes us clean before God," and Jesus said, "You don't understand anything. It's not on the outside that makes you clean, it's from the heart because out of the heart comes thefts and adulteries and fornication's and wickedness and vile things." Now I'm just amplifying and paraphrasing but Jesus said the problem is in the heart. If your heart is not changing, you can put on all of this religion and ritual you want and you haven't changed in your standing before God and you haven't changed in your nature, you just made yourself a religious sinner.

So we have a heart problem, we have a core problem, so that means behavior modification won't work for us. It won't work for anyone. I was in a business class at the university and I was preaching then and the professor referred to me as being in the business of behavior modification. "We're all in the same business, you're just trying to get people to act right." I thought, "No. No, that's not what we're about. I'm not just trying to change your behavior, I want you to be changed from your heart which will change your behavior." We don't need just a little tweaking to get things right, we don't need to just add on a ticket into heaven by praying a sinner's prayer, though that may be okay to do but that doesn't mean your heart is changed. The Spirit has to change the heart. You can repeat a prayer in the flesh and never be changed, that's why Southern Baptists have 7, 8, 9 million people who don't even go to church and they have all prayed a prayer because they need more than tweaking, they need more than a little adjustment, they need an inter-radical transformation.

Do you know that in a recent survey of evangelical Christians in America, the majority agree with this statement, quote, "Man is basically good"? Now that's evangelicals, that's not Catholics. That's not the more liberal wing of Protestantism, that's supposed to be Bible believing Christians. You see, they've begun, evangelicals have begun to see sin as something on the periphery of human beings. It's there and it's a problem but it's just kind of out there on the outside of us. It's not part of the main part of who we are. They would say it's not a core issue so it's on the periphery of our reality and so we just need better education and that's going to fix all the problems. We need a new understanding. We need a new environment for people and that's going to straighten the people out. What all this means is that most professing Christians are taking their cues from the world and not the word of God. A lot of the reason for that is that these pulpits are weak. Pulpits are not thundering the truth of the word of God so the sheep go around thinking stupid things. You need the truth to think right. The Bible reminds us in Psalm 143:2 that no man living is righteous. No man living is righteous. We have a core problem. It puts us in an irreparable condition. The Bible reminds us, Jeremiah 17:9, that the heart is deceitful and the heart is desperately wicked, who can understand it? Isn't that an interesting phrase, who can understand it? If you stop to think about what goes on in your heart from time to time, there is surely a part of you that cries out to God and says, "God, I don't understand this. There's stuff in here I don't even understand." And God says, "Yeah, you're corrupt to the core of your being." The word "deceitful" there means "a subtle and malicious trapping." Your heart is actually in the process of subtly and maliciously entrapping you

and tripping you up. "Desperately wicked" means it's incurably wicked. That's the status of man's heart. You see, if you think you can fix your sin problem, you have the wrong concept of sin. We are scarred too deeply. We are flawed too deeply to fix it ourselves. When we reach deep within to find the answer, we summon a broken tool. When we look deep into our souls, we draw out the answer and only find more of the problem.

When the children did their musical, boy, it was so good. I appreciate the rich truth that was in it. Dr. Law and Dr. Grace. What did Dr. Grace do? Dr. Grace went in there and he didn't just fix the heart, he basically said, "That thing is so rotten and so vile, we've got to get rid of it and get you a brand-new heart," because you see, the heart of the human problem is the problem of the human heart. That's Christian truth. That's where we are.

Now let's go to D into this radical depravity 101 and that is: the evidence is all around. I may not spend a whole lot of time here. I may just glance through my notes here. Evidence is all around us. How much more evidence do you need that the times are out of joint and man's got a problem in his innermost being? I think one of the most revealing evidences of man's fallenness is his brevity. Oh, you proud rascal you. You think you're something? Somebody tell Donald Trump that the Bible says he is but a mere breath, here today and then gone. The greatest, the most powerful, the most wealthy and the most influential, the Bible says you're like a mere shadow that passes by. The shadow pops up and then it's gone. There just ain't much to us because fallenness has corrupted us.

The evidence is all around. Our own babies show the indisputable disposition to sin. Like I've said a million times, you don't have to teach a baby to tell a lie, they'll do that. I mean, very early on they'll just lie, they'll scream and cry like the world has come to an end and mama will pick them up and they'll be quiet in eight seconds. You don't have to teach a child to say, "Mine! Mine!" Selfishness, greed, it's just there naturally. You have to teach a child to tell the truth. You have to teach a child to care for and serve others. And here's what happens if you don't teach children those things: you get the millennials. Not all of them but far too many of them. They are whiny, spoiled rotten brats who haven't been made to be disciplined, be responsible, and work for what they get and they believe everybody else owes them everything else. They need safe rooms because the world is just too difficult for them. When you think about how can a person think that way, I can tell you why, the same reason you could if God hadn't by grace stopped you from it, and that is we have an incurable, irreparable condition in the core of our hearts, we are fallen in sin.

The evidences are all around, the fact that God has to be ever present with restraints against evil shows the fallenness of man. God is very active. He is active within with restraints. He puts a conscience in every man. The Bible says he writes his law in every man's heart. God knows where we would be if God removed that restraint. And the spiritual forces, the evil forces in this world that throw unrelenting temptations, God is involved in a restraining power there. And if you read the book of Revelation, you see the horror and the nightmare that's going to occur on planet earth in the end times. Do you know what that means? It means God removed the restraints against evil and let man do what man would do without God's restraints. That proves where man is. Man's clear

inability to enjoy and treasure God, man's complete inability to appreciate the Bible, the Gospel, the church and the Lord Jesus Christ. Why are men so turned off and disinterested in the thing that is the great treasure of eternity? It's the fallenness of men's hearts.

Even our good deeds, the Bible says, are flawed and corrupted. They end up being bad. The Bible reminds us in Isaiah 64:6, "For all of us have become like one who is unclean," now notice this, "And all our righteous deeds," that means when we are trying to do our best, now this is man on his own apart from God, okay? Man on his own, man in his natural state when he tries to do the righteous thing, God says, "Those things to me are like a filthy garment." That is the menstrual cloth, literally what that word means. God says, "When man puts on his best good deeds, to me it's the most vile and offensive thing you can imagine." Why? Why would you say such a thing? Because God says, "You don't understand, you are corrupt from the core of your being and everything you put on without changing the core is tainted and corrupted." This is the doctrine of radical depravity. This is the doctrine of man's fallenness and man's capacity to make the most foolish decisions.

I've just been reading lately about the homeless problem in San Francisco. I understand they have about 10 people now that they have hired and their salaries reach almost \$200,000 apiece. Do you know what their job is? One group of the 10 people cleans up the human feces that cover the sidewalks in San Francisco. Another part of those people clean up the needles left there from the drug addicts shooting up. And the reason we have this kind of problem in San Francisco is because the liberals who don't have the wisdom of God believe that somehow these people deserve some sort of special rights and so if they want to live on the streets and they want to live beneath the dignity of animals and they want to shoot up their drugs, well, we owe it to them. Where does that come from? How does man get to where he thinks so warped? Because we are corrupted in the core of our beings. We think foolish thoughts. Now listen, brothers and sisters, there is certainly a place for compassion for those who are mentally ill and need to get off their drug problem, but there is a responsibility and accountability and tough love that needs to be involved in these things, not just permissiveness. But you see, if you basically believe that man is good and he's not evil, then you would say, "Well, everything you feel and lust after must be okay." What foolishness. Why such foolishness? Man is corrupt in the core of his being.

So many others. Well, let me just mention this one. I can't go by without mentioning this one: man's misuse of good instruments. From the dawn of civilization, man has made and created things and about everything he's made and everything he's created he's used to hurt, murder or go to war with it. Now there is a just cause for self-defense and there's a just cause for war, but why is man so needful to take his inventions and use them to destroy others? Because men are fallen and so war abounds. Do you want to know the evidence of man's fallenness and human depravity? Spend five minutes on social media. Filth. Vile. Hate. Envy. Jealousy. Malice. Cruelty. Endless amounts of it. Why is that there? Why is that so easy and natural? Because men are fallen. There is a corruption to the core of their being.

Now E in our outline: what I call the five basic texts. The five basic texts and what I want you to see here is that if you were talking with someone and teaching them about the total depravity of man because this is contrary to man's natural thinking, if you were looking for some verses to use, here are some verses that you might want to look to. The first one and we've already talked about it so I'll just mention it is Genesis 3, the fall of man; the story of man's fall into sin is such a clear teaching that shows the irreparable condition, the depravity, the sinfulness of mankind. Then the flood narrative and a couple of verses in particular. Genesis 6:5 where God looks at the whole face of the earth and when he looks at all the men he says, "every intent of the thoughts of man's heart was only evil continually." Did you hear that? Then in Genesis 8:21 where God promises, "I will never curse the whole earth again like this." Why? "Because for the intent of man's heart is evil from his youth." God says man has such a corruption issue, if I keep destroying all of mankind when they really deserve it, I'll never stop destroying. So the creation narrative and the fall and the flood narrative shows us the fallenness of man.

Now if you want to turn real quick, we'll only just look at it quickly. Ephesians 2 is a very foundational text and we've spent a lot of time here so I'll just read it and we'll move on but Ephesians 2, beginning in verse 1. The apostle writes to the church and he says, "And you were," or you being "dead in your trespasses and sins, in which you formerly walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, of the spirit that is now working in the sons of disobedience. Among them we too all formerly lived in the lusts of our flesh, indulging the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, even as the rest." He says, "You were in such a corrupt state that your very being called for God's wrath. You were by nature children of wrath." Now obviously we can take a lot of time and exegete all that's here but that's I think one of the five chief texts. That would be the third one that I would point you to.

Then Romans 3. Would you go back to Romans 3? Another quite familiar text of Scripture but as Paul is building his argument on the work of God in saving men by grace, he gives us a vivid description of mankind's condition and he begins in Romans 3:9 by saying, "What then? Are we better than they?" Are us Gentiles better than the Jews? "Not at all; for we have already charged that both Jews and Greeks are all under sin." Now to Paul's day in Paul's world, that means everybody. You are either a Jew or a Greek, Jew or non-Jew. Verse 10, "as it is written, 'There is none righteous, not even one,'" now notice this, "'there is none who understands and none who seeks for God.'" That means man on his own cannot find God. Verse 12, "All have turned aside, together they have become useless; there is none who does good, there is not even one." No one is good in God's eyes. "'Their throat is an open grave, with their tongues they keep deceiving, the poison of asps is under their lips; whose mouth is full of cursing and bitterness; their feet are swift to shed blood, distraction and misery are in their paths, and the path of peace they have not known. There is no fear of God before their eyes.'" Now we know that whatever the Law says, it speaks to those who are under the Law, so that every mouth may be closed and all the world may become accountable to God." So that would be the fourth text. Now look, there are very very many that teach the fallenness

and the depravity of man but these are just five that I think are perhaps the best that you could use in teaching this truth.

Then one final one, Mark 7, if you would, Mark 7:21, Jesus said, "For from within, out of the heart of men, proceed the evil thoughts, fornications, thefts, murders, adulteries, deeds of coveting and wickedness, as well as deceit, sensuality, envy, slander, pride and foolishness. All these evil things proceed from within and defile the man." Again, they thought defilements came from maybe being close to a dead body or all these rituals and rules the Jews had about your external conduct and he said, "No, you don't understand. You came forth from the womb with a heart full of filth and evil and that's what defiles you." So those are five good texts that teach the condition of man being in this irreparable fallen condition before God.

Now our last point, III: where it all ends. Where it all ends. Babylon is fallen. Interesting that when you get to the book of Revelation and you look at the end time events, there is a time when this great future Babylon which represents a great global church state, the antichrist will rule the government and the antichrist will be head over this worldwide church, and in every way, well, I shouldn't say in every way, I should say in many ways it will look like Christianity. I'm convinced of that. I think they'll use the Bible some. They'll talk about the things of the Lord. They'll use biblical jargon but it's not true. It's a false church and even secular historians say the reason why Babylon is referred to as this culmination of this government religious empire in the end times is because ancient Babylon was sort of the foundation stone that most pagan cults and false beliefs came out of. If you study the history of religions other than Christianity, you'll find their roots in the old Babylonish religions.

But there was an event I want to point out to you right quick. Babylon under Belshazzar, Nebuchadnezzar his father before him, had conquered Israel and when they conquered Israel, they took the spoils out of Jerusalem and they took the holy vessels out of the temple and they brought those spoils and those captives to Babylon, and one night King Belshazzar was having one of his drunken orgy feasts and in his blasphemous heart he ordered one of his servants, "Go and get the vessels we took out of Jehovah's temple in Jerusalem," and they brought the vessels in there and he began to pour his wine up for himself and his concubines and his partying friends, and they began to drink their vile wine and worship their vile gods and participate in their vile deeds of immorality with the goblets devoted to the worship of Jehovah, and all of a sudden a hand appeared and this hand appeared and it began writing on the wall and the king was terrified. The Bible said he was just shaking and he began to ask his wisemen and his conjurers, "What does this mean?" They said, "We don't know," but through a series of events they said, "there is a very wise man among the captives from Israel. He's a young boy, actually. His name is Daniel and we believe he might can interpret this." They summoned Daniel. Daniel comes in. The king says, "Daniel, can you tell me what that says?" He said, "King, I can tell you what it says. I can interpret what the hand wrote. The handwriting says, 'King, you've been weighed in God's balance and you've come up wanting.' Your kingdom is falling to the Medo-Persian Empire. They're going to crush you." But it's interesting to me that the keynote point of rebellion and sin was when they used things dedicated to the

holy worship of God for indulgence in sin and for selfish pride. What's the future Babylon going to be in the book of Revelation? What's it going to look like? It's going to be a great worldwide empire connected to a great worldwide state church and they are going to use the things of God, the truths of God, the word of God, the things of the Gospel but for the end of sinful indulgence and selfish pride, the same thing Belshazzar was doing with the goblets.

Revelation 17. Let's start with Revelation 18:2. It should be on your screen, I think. Revelation 18:2. The angel is pronouncing what God is going to do, "And he cried out with a mighty voice, saying, 'Fallen, fallen is Babylon the great!'" This future Babylon is of the same spirit of the old ancient Babylon that Daniel was taken captive by. Fallen is this future Babylon. "She has become a dwelling place of demons and a prison of every unclean spirit, and a prison of every unclean and hateful bird."

Now back to Revelation 17:1, it should be on your screen. Revelation 17:1, "Then one of the seven angels who had the seven bowls came and spoke with me, saying, 'Come here, I will show you the judgment of the great harlot who sits on many waters.'" So here she is called a harlot. I think this primarily refers to this false worldwide church. You see, in every way in the Babylonish religion is a counterfeit. It's hypocrisy to the core. Notice, listen, the true church is the bride, this is the harlot.

Revelation 11 says this ancient city that is now personified in the new Babylon is like the city of Sodom. She's become a Sodom but the true city is holy Jerusalem.

Then in Revelation 18:7 and 8, "To the degree that she," this false harlot church, "glorified herself and lived sensuously, to the same degree give her torment and mourning; for she says in her heart, 'I sit as a queen and I am not a widow, and will never see mourning.' For this reason in one day her plagues will come, pestilence and mourning and famine, and she will be burned up with fire; for the Lord God who judges her is strong." So here she comes with her adherents, this great, false, counterfeit, harlot church. By the way, I'm convinced, scholars would agree with me, this church will be made up of unsaved Baptists, unsaved Methodists, unsaved Assembly of God, unsaved Pentecostals, unsaved Church of Christ, unsaved Roman Catholics, unsaved of all the professing denominations and segments of Christianity. How did this great harlot church build her constituency in this day? She built it by accommodating their sin and advancing their pride which is just what Belshazzar was doing with the holy vessels way back there in ancient Babylon.

Here's what I'm saying to you: the manifestation of depravity will reach the high watermark in the last days in the great harlot church but that will be the end of it. Jesus will come with crushing power and cleanse the earth of this vile, sinful, depraved institution. That's where it's going but that's where it will end. I don't know about you but I think I want to be a part of the true remnant church. Not the church that seduces and grows by catering to the sinfulness and the worldly desires of its constituents but that is built. You see, this harlot was built on sinfulness and unrighteousness. Jesus has built his

bride on righteousness and truth. Well, the high water mark will be reached in human depravity and God's going to crush it and bring it completely down.

I want to close with this verse, Psalm 103:10, "He has not dealt with us according to our sins, Nor rewarded us according to our iniquities." My, my, my. You and I are just as corrupted, just as warped, just as flawed, just as wicked in our core beings as anyone else, but because of an expiring Savior on a cross, God in love has chosen not to deal with us according to our sins or not according to our iniquities. You know, the amazing paradox is this, "Pastor, you've shared with us how there is just evidence abounding everywhere that man is fallen, that man is flawed, that he is irreparably corrupted," but do you know what the highest evidence is, the most clear manifestation of the depravity of man's heart, the fallenness of man's heart? The cross because it took the death of the Son of God to cure it. That shows you the height of it, that shows you the weight of it, that shows you the greatness of it but listen to me: though the depth of man's sin is great, the height of God's love is greater and through Jesus Christ and the death he paid for, the price he paid on the cross, every fallen irreparably corrupt sinner can know complete, for real, forever cleansing and forgiveness of all sin. Of all sin. Of all sin.

Church, don't grow used to the fact that I teach and preach these things hopefully faithfully. Oh, contemplate them, dwell on them, meditate on them, that you might appreciate the glories and the wonders and the goodness and the sovereign grace that saves you. No wonder the songwriter said, "Hallelujah, what a Savior."