

Revelation 17:13-10

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[0 : 00] Turn to Revelation chapter 17. Revelation chapter 17. The novelist Flannery O'Connor was asked, Why do you produce such bizarre characters in your stories?

! She said in answer to that question, for those who are nearly blind, you have to draw very large, simple caricatures. For those who are nearly blind, you have to draw very large, simple caricatures. And that is what you've got in Revelation 17. It's a cartoon. It's a caricature. A good cartoonist, someone like Matt in the Daily Tarot, is a social commentator. He draws a very funny picture, and yet there's a serious message.

A cartoon is a kind of visual metaphor. It illustrates the point of view, doesn't it? It gets under the radar. And in Revelation 17, you've got an apocalyptic cartoon that is given to us.

It's very much like a cartoon. There's an old chart, sitting on a city with seven hills. That is what it is. A woman who's dripping with jewellery, dressed in purple, sitting on a city with seven hills.

[1 : 07] It's grotesque, isn't it? It's bizarre. It's a cartoon. And it's got a message. Anybody seen that cartoon, amongst John's readers, would recognise that it was Rome that he was talking about.

Rome is a city that is built on seven hills. So it's got a real contemporary message, hasn't it, for John's readers. But there's also a message for you and I. Now, when you read it, first of all, it seems really complicated, doesn't it?

There's lots of things that I don't understand about Revelation 17, but the big picture, again, is clear and simple, as it always is in Revelation. So first of all, let's look at this bizarre character.

Note in verse 5 her identity. Look at verse 5. And on her forehead was written a name of mystery. Babylon, the great mother of prostitutes and of earth's abominations.

It's interesting to know, if you know this, that prostitutes in the first century wore a headband with a name on it. That was the dress of the first century prostitutes. Well, written on her headband is her name, mystery.

[2 : 13] Babylon, the great, the mother of prostitutes, the abomination of the earth. Now, for us, a mystery is something that we don't understand. It's something that we don't understand and it can't be explained.

So, people say the Trinity law is a mystery. You can't understand it. Actually, that's not how the Bible talks about it at all. The word mystery in the Bible is something that we would never have guessed if God had not explained it.

We would never have guessed it if God had not explained it. That is the word mystery in the Bible. And God does explain the mystery. So, look at verse 7. In verse 7, where the angel said to me, Why do you marvel?

I'll tell you the mystery of the woman and of the beast with seven heads and ten horns that carries her. So, this is a mystery that we wouldn't have been able to puzzle out for ourselves, but God is going to explain it to us.

This chapter of Revelation, as we come to every chapter in the Bible, we're not to speculate about it, we're to learn what God has to say about the world in which we live.

[3 : 20] That is why it's in the book of the Bible. Look at verse 9. It calls for a mind with wisdom. To read the book of Revelation, I've said it before, you need wisdom. And wisdom is not the same as cleverness, is it?

There are an awful lot of clever dicks out there who try to interpret Revelation. And they tie themselves in knots, don't they? There's an awful lot of nonsense spoken about the book of Revelation.

It's not cleverness that is called for. When you come to the book of Revelation, it says you need wisdom. And wisdom is something different to cleverness. Wisdom is actually putting into practice

God's revealed will.

That's all it is. Putting into practice God's revealed will. Because the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom. And when God explains something to us, to be wise is just to put it into practice.

That is how we're meant to come to this chapter. This woman, she's a mystery. But the mystery is explained. This chapter could be called, couldn't it? I was going to call this Beauty and the Beast. But at first sight, she seems to be a beauty, doesn't she?

[4 : 22] But when you look closely, she's no beauty at all. In fact, she's pretty disgusting. She's mutton dressed as lamb, isn't she? Look, she's dolled up to the nines, dripping in jewellery, verse 6.

She's drunk on the blood of the saints, we're told. She's called the great whore, the great harlot, the great prostitute, verse 1. In verse 5, she's called the mother of all prostitutes.

Do you remember the first Gulf War? Ah, Sadr was saying to me, he promised George Bush Senior the mother of all wars. Well, this is the mother of all prostitutes. She's the cause of all the trouble in the world, according to verse 5, isn't she?

Babylon, the great mother of prostitutes and of earth's abominations. She's serious trouble, this woman. And you see, that immediately happens to identify her.

Negatively, at least, I want to tell you tonight who she's not. The woman dressed in scarlet, dressed in purple, sitting on the beast, with seven heads and ten horns, this woman, dripping in jewellery, drunk on the blood of the saints, and sitting on a city of seven hills, she is not the church.

[5 : 26] Alright? Now, I say that because the most popular interpretation of Revelation 17 for Protestants is to say that she is the church, that she's the Roman Catholic Church. It goes back to the time of the Reformation.

Usually, she's dressed in cardinal purple, they say, sitting on a city of seven hills, which everybody knows is Rome, and at the time of the Reformation, people thought this is the apostate, the false church, the Roman Catholic Church.

The problem with that interpretation, even though it makes some sense, is the woman is, verse one, a prostitute, she's not an adulteress. An apostate church, and the church which has rejected the gospel, would be guilty of adultery, but not prostitution.

So, who is the woman? If she's not the church? Who is she? Well, we're told, we don't have to guess. Look at verse five, who is she? She's Babylon the Great. So, what you've got in Revelation chapter 17 is the counterpoint to Revelation chapter 12.

21. I can't wait to go to Revelation 21. Do you remember what you've got in Revelation 21? You've got the bride, and you've got the city. It's a description of the church.

[6 : 36] The bride of Christ, that is also the city that comes down from God. So, the church of Christ is both a woman and a city. Well, in Revelation 17, what have you got?

You've got a woman and your city. And it's Babylon, not Jerusalem. It's Babylon the Great. First mention of Babylon is way back in Genesis 11, isn't it?

Babel. It's the oldest place we know of for human civilization. Babel, as it was known in Genesis 10, was the place where human beings set to organize themselves in civilizations and cities.

where human beings began to organize themselves in rebellion against God. Let me remind you of Genesis 11. It's key to understanding what the cartoon is all about.

Here's this woman, Babylon the Great. So, in Genesis 11, we're told that the whole world had one language. It had a common speech.

[7 : 35] Genesis 11, verse 2. And human beings are beginning to settle down. They're not nomads anymore. And they're going to build a city. Let me read to you from Genesis 11, 3 and 4.

And they said to one another, come, let us build bricks and burn them thoroughly and make brick for stone bitterly from water. Then they said, come, let us build ourselves a city and a tower with its top in the heavens and let us make a name for ourselves lest we be dispersed over the face of the whole earth.

Now, there's nothing wrong with that necessarily. It's the beginning of human civilization. So, here is the first city. But the problem is not the building of the first city, but it's the reason they want to build the city.

It's their whole reason. For building. It's their attitude. So, chapter 11, verse 4. Let us build ourselves a city and a tower with its top in the heavens and let us make a name for ourselves lest we be dispersed over the face of the whole earth.

I love the way in the next verse, in verse 5, we're told, the Lord came down to see the city. It's as if God has got to use a magnifying glass to come and see it.

[8 : 41] This great city that they are building to make a name for themselves and God has got to peer down through the clouds to see it. And it rather puts into perspective what is being described in Genesis, in Revelation 17.

It's what Babylon stands for. Human beings organise themselves in rebellion against God. That is what the world means in the Bible. That's a massive help when you understand that.

The word world in the Bible is not the mountains and the valleys and the seas and the trees. The word world in the Bible means human beings organised in rebellion against God.

The word world in the Bible does not mean every single human being that lives in the world. So that is why John 3.16 is really a terrific verse. God so loved the world. Not the world in its bigness, but the world in its badness.

Human beings who are God's enemies organising themselves in rebellions against God. That is what Babylon stands for. Of course in the Bible the next real big mention of Babylon is the book of Daniel.

[9 : 51] And by the time of Daniel Babylon has become the most important city in the world. At the time of the exile. And God used Babylon to swallow out his people, to teach his people a lesson.

By carrying them off into exile. And God used this world power then. Babylon in Daniel's day was the equivalent to the US today.

The world's superpower. Nebuchadnezzar who was the king of Babylon in those days was the most powerful man in the world. But Babylon fell overnight. And now it is just something in the history of us.

You can go to Iraq and look at the ruins. It's come and it's gone. In John's day the equivalent to Babylon was Rome. And that is what anyone reading Revelation 17 would immediately recognise. They would recognise the cartoon. The woman who is called Babylon the Great. This woman who is the equivalent of Babylon the Great sits on a city in the seven hills we're told in verse 9. And anyone seeing this in their minds I would think it's Rome.

[10 : 56] John is wanting to say something about Rome. They would immediately recognise that. And the most powerful leader in the world at that time was Caesar probably at this time demission. But today what is it?

It's London New York Sydney Washington Beijing It's all those places. Because this woman this cartoon is about human beings organising themselves in rebellion against God and building a tower to the heavens so that they can topple God from his throne.

This is what it's about. So Revelation 17 is not about the history books. It is about anywhere and everywhere where people organise themselves. Where people try to rule the world without God. And that is what the word world means in the Bible. And that makes this cartoon doesn't it Revelation 17 so fairly up to date. Because what John has managed to capture in this little word picture is a recurring pattern.

You want to see that. Look at this in 7-8. It's an animated cartoon. It's a moving cartoon. Verse 7. But the angel said why do you marvel?

[12 : 10] I will tell you the mystery of the woman that the beast has seven heads and ten horns that carries her. She's moving. She's riding a beast with seven heads and ten horns. You can draw that if you want kids.

And you notice how the beast is described in verse 8. The beast that you saw was and is not and is about to rise from the bottom of the pit. So here's the woman riding on a beast.

Here's the world sitting in the lap of Satan. And the beast do you see it? The end of verse 8 it was and is not and is to come.

Let me just show you that again. It was and is not and is to come. Now where have you seen that before? Revelation chapter 1 and verse 4.

Let me read it to you. Revelation chapter 1 and verse 4. Grace and peace from him who is and who was and who is to come. Three or four times in the book of Revelation you find those words describing the Lord Jesus.

[13 : 18] Jesus is the one who is and who was and is to come in the book of Revelation. And again and again we see that the devil wants to counterfeit. That's what he's like. There's not an original thought in the devil's mind.

He's always counterfeiting. What does Calvin call him God's ape? The devil is always aping copying God. It's as if he wants to parody God. So the woman on the beast it's no wonder she's covered with blasphemous names verse 3 because it is the ultimate blasphemy isn't it?

To take the place of God in people's lives. And that's what the world does. Inspired by Satan that is what the world does. That is what the spirit of Antichrist is.

That is what John wants you to see here. The spirit of the world in rebellion against God. It's the ultimate blasphemy. To take the place of God in people's lives.

That is the spirit of Babylon. We don't need God. We don't need God. Let's make a name for ourselves. Let's build a city with a tower that reaches to the heavens and we will topple God from his throne.

[14:19] That was the lie of Satan in the garden was that? Come on Eve. Come on Adam. You don't need God. You can be a God yourself.

You can be like God. That is the spirit that is in the world. And that is what lies behind every worldly system. And it doesn't matter what kind of clothes she's wearing.

What kind of makeup she's got on. Whether it's capitalism or communism or any other ism.

Whether it's secularism or hedonism or atheism. Whatever it is. What lies behind it is this anti-Christ spirit.

You see what was so astonishing about this grotesque character. This woman riding on the beast. What is so astonishing about this woman is her ability to reinvent herself. She's the original comeback kid isn't she?

She was and is not and is yet to come. Now I think that's all I need to say about the picture. There's lots of details but I don't want to get into the details. I think the picture is pretty clear.

[15:20] This woman on the beast and I want to apply it in three ways. Number one don't be surprised. Number one don't be surprised. Look at verse 7. But the angel said to me why do you marvel?

I will tell you the mystery of the woman and of the beast with the seven heads and ten horns that carries her. Verse 8 the beast that you saw was and is and is not and is about to rise from the bottomless pit and go to destruction.

It says this doesn't it and the dwellers on earth whose names have not been written in the book of life from the foundation of the world they will marvel to see the beast because it was and is not and it's to come.

So verse 7 don't marvel. Why do you marvel? Verse 8 those who are not in the Lamb's book of life they will marvel. You are the people of God you have discernment you have the wisdom from God you don't need to be taken by surprise.

If your name is written in the book of life God's people won't be surprised by this. And he begins to release doesn't he the history of the beast look at verses 10 to 12 people get terribly bogged down in these verses I've read lots of theories about these seven kings and ten horns it depends when the commentary was written some people think it was the European Union if it's from the 70s or 80s some people think it was the Polymeral but you don't need to bother with that.

[16:44] With who these kings are and which period of history it relates to or what empire has been described it's obvious let me read you verse 10 and they also are seven kings five of whom have fallen one is the other has not yet come and when he does come he must remain only a little while it's the same pattern it was is not will come verse 11 as for the beast that was and is not it is an eighth but it belongs to the seventh and it goes to destruction destruction don't be surprised says the angel it's happened before it's happening now it will happen again every dog has its day they will have their hour of power the seven kings of verse 9 and the ten kings of verse 12 I think represent the whole of worldwide kind of anti-Christian regime throughout history I don't think John had one regime in mind I don't think we'll ever know the answer to that but the principle is very very obvious isn't it what is he saying is this some of them have gone already and good riddance to them there will never be another starling thank God the old days of the cold war those grim faces of the politburo we won't see that again

Adolf Hitler is gone they collapsed like a pack of cards gone and good riddance to them and the Nazis have come and gone good riddance Saddam Hussein has come and gone good riddance some of them are still with us at the present time but they won't last they won't last very long and some are still to come so watch out don't be surprised God's people should not be surprised when these things happen on the world scene it's a famous book isn't it the decline and the fall of the

Roman Empire it's Revelation 17 every civilization has written within it the seeds of its own destruction that is what Revelation 17 is saying there's an inner rottenness to the human race when it organizes itself and it leaves God out of it every civilization like that will collapse western civilization if it continues to live and plan without God will collapse

God will not let it continue they used to say the sun would never set on the British Empire but it has Hitler thought he was building a regime that would last a thousand years what did it last ten, twelve people go to Rome on holiday now don't they they look at the ruins why on earth are we surprised when these great states come and go John says in one of his letters the world and everything in it is passing away so are you going to sell your soul for the world it's temporary isn't it it's passing away the pomp and the ceremony the speech of symbols everything that glitters and looks so fascinating everything that you think is really worth having and getting everything that is so powerful and so permanent is all passing away so don't be surprised when that happens God's people should not be taken by surprise God's people are wise the people whose names are written in the book of life are wise they've God's word and they've

God's spirit within them and we shouldn't be surprised at the state of the world we shouldn't allow the world to be pulled over our eyes we shouldn't be impressed by the pomp and the splendour and the posturing things in the world don't be surprised that's not my phone I keep speaking in case my phone goes off that's not don't be surprised the second thing is don't be seduced don't be seduced that's the problem with the prostitute isn't it it's not only that she sins herself but that she causes others to sin with her so look at verse 2 with whom the kings of the earth have committed sexual immorality and with the wine of whose sexual immorality the dwellers on earth have become drunk look at verse 4 the woman was arrayed in purple and scarlet and adored with gold and jewels and pearls hold him in her hand a gold cup full of abominations and the impurities of her sexual immorality look at verse 18 and the woman that you saw is the great city that has dominion over the kings of the earth look at the clientele of this woman the rich and the famous isn't it surprise surprise so there you go in the bible you can go to

Daniel chapter 4 when Babylon was at it's best Daniel chapter 4 and verse 30 of Daniel which is the famous chapter of Nebuchadnezzar if I can find this Daniel chapter 4 and Nebuchadnezzar is right at the height of his power he's the most powerful man in the world look at what he says he says this verse 30 of Daniel 4 king answered and said is this not great Babylon which I have built by my mighty power as a royal residence and for the glory of my majesty and then look at verse 31 while the words are still in the king's mouth there fell a voice from heaven oh king Nebuchadnezzar to you the kingdom has departed from you and you will be driven from men and your dwelling shall be with the beasts of the field here is this powerful powerful man and he believes his own publicity he's at the height of his powers and everybody is saying you're a great leader

[22 : 26] Nebuchadnezzar and he has a nervous breakdown he's gone like that here is Nebuchadnezzar he's drunk with power he's intoxicated with a sense of his own importance that is what Babylon did to Nebuchadnezzar it seduced him it enticed him and ultimately it destroyed him did you know Stalin trained for the priesthood did you know that as a young man Stalin thought he was going to be a Roman Catholic priest something happened to draw him away he became a monster and you see this woman and what we're talking about is the world inspired the world inspired by Satan there are lots out there there are lots of good things in the world don't think I'm not saying that there are lots of good things about the world we're not talking about the world that God has given us the good things about life the good things God has given you to enjoy which you should enjoy and it's wrong not to enjoy them we're talking about humanity organised in rebelling against

God that is what we're talking about here and that is what the bible means by the word world and this world can be a very dangerous place it can be seductive it can be enticing show how the devil used the world to try and tempt Jesus in fact there's an echo of it here in Revelation 17 verse 3 and he carried me away in the spirit into a wilderness three times in the book of Revelation you'll find that John says I was in the spirit in the Lord's day and I saw the risen Jesus who ascended Christ chapter 4 he said I was in the spirit and he's shown the throne of God in heaven and again he says he's here in the spirit and he's travelling to Las Vegas in verse 3 there's a city in a desert now there's an echo isn't there there's an echo of how Jesus was carried into the spirit by the spirit into the desert to be tempted by Satan do you remember how the devil tempted

Jesus he took him up to a high mountain and he showed him all the kingdoms of the earth with all their wealth and power and he says bow down and worship me and you can have that you want world dominion isn't that what you're all about Jesus isn't that why you came!

to follow you I can show you the way you don't have to go to the cross you don't have to die you can set up your kingdom you don't have to suffer do you see how the devil comes riding in like that into the desert to tempt Christ to tempt the Christ from going to the cross to entice him away from doing the will of the father can you see that?

Malcolm McGregor said this Jesus but had to give a nod of agreement and he could have constructed Christendom not on four shaky gospels and a defeated man nailed for cross but on the basis of sound social economic planning and principles every utopia could have been brought to pass every utopia realised every dream made to come true what a benefactor Jesus then would have been proclaimed equally in the London School of Economics and the Harvard and the Harvard Business School a statue in Parliament Square and even bigger one in Capitol Hill what I want to say is this no one no one is immune from this prostitute from this woman the world the mentality of the world inspired from Satan nobody is safe from it we see that don't we Judas Iscariot what happened to him he betrayed his lord for 30 pieces of silver it's not very much money at all it's more profound than that isn't it the gospel tell us a little bit about Judas they tell us that he was a greedy man and John says the devil entered into him but the devil needs a point of entry into a person's life what was the point of entry into

[26 : 22] Judas' life well the bible tells us he was a treasurer of the twelve and he used to have his hand in the till he used to spend what was given for the twelve on himself he was a greedy covetous man the bible said no doubt there were things that Judas wanted in life he wanted comfort he wanted money he wanted to spend on himself he probably wanted Jesus to be recognised for the teacher that he was he probably wanted Jesus to be lauded on the telly all sorts of things but it was the world it was the world he was being enticed by seduced by the world money status recognition and Satan entered it the woman came riding on the beast which he led into his own destruction do you remember right at the very end of Judas' life it's very poignant he is disgusted Judas is repulsed by what he's done and he takes the thirty pieces of silver and he throws them back to the high priest but it's too late think of

Demas Paul and 2 Timothy he's in prison he's lonely and he says to Timothy won't you come and visit me Timothy everyone has forsaken me Demas has forsaken me having loved this present world same thing again even amongst the apostolic band even amongst those giants of church planting Paul's little missionary team this woman on the beast comes riding him so this man Demas who used to be a lover of Christ now becomes a lover of things don't be surprised and don't be seduced by the woman on the beast she is no respecter of persons the woman on the beast she comes to church and she sits in church without any embarrassment at all it's very very easy as if it churches to be seduced where ministers become professionals where you lot become the consumers and worship becomes entertainment and God is irrelevant but it's very very professional that is worldliness worldliness is not doing this and not doing that and not doing that it's to have the spirit of battle so we build our mega church we don't need God we put on a good program people flock to us

Tozer said in the 40s and 50s he said this it is scarcely possible in most places to get anyone to attend a meeting where the only attraction is God it's scarcely possible in most places to get anyone to attend a meeting where the only attraction is God there's a worldliness and it's in the church Horatius Bonner the hymn writer said I looked for the church and I found it in the world well that's where the church is meant to be the church is meant to be in the world you are meant to live in the world you and I are meant to rub shoulders with this world we're the sort of Christians that pull up our skirts and go into retreat into a holy handle that is not Christianity that is what the Pharisees did if we're real Christians we will be like Jesus we will rub shoulders with the people of the world and we'll probably get a bad reputation like Jesus did for that very reason well Horatius Bonner said I looked for the church and I found it where it was meant to be in the world but then think of a boat a boat in the harbour a boat that's in the water well that's where a boat is meant to be but once the water gets into the boat well it's a problem isn't it and once the world gets into the church we're not talking about this place or that place we're not talking about the superficialities and the trivialities we're talking about the spirit of

Babylon and when that gets into the church don't be surprised don't be seduced and lastly don't sleep with the enemy don't sleep with the enemy now the chapter is full isn't of sexual imagery it's absolutely full of it and it is meant to embarrass you and it's meant to provoke you and it's meant to disturb you and unsettle you because sex with a prostitute does not bring satisfaction does it there's all the difference in the world between lust and love it doesn't bring satisfaction in the end it is repulsive her own clientele they turn on her and they are disgusted with her at the end of the chapter even her pimps are disgusted when they throw her out it's a disgusting picture in Revelation 17 and it's meant to shock you it's meant to unsettle us and startle us because you and I are not made for that we are made for

God oh God you have made us for yourselves and we are restless until we find our rest in thee we will be for fellowship with God not this woman and we cheat on him by going with her that's the point John wants you to understand when we go with the world in whatever shape or form when we go with the world we cheat on the one who really loves us and died for us we offend against that love which is at the heart it's the heart of the gospel when we go with the world I read this HG Wells was a famous novelist he wrote what did he write War of the War of the War of the day when he was newly married let me quote him he says this the sweets and perils of success were opening up for me he was a successful author very influential a very important man of his day and he was being courted by the world he was being given accolades by the world and the media and he says when the sweets and perils of success were opening out before me he said it was as well for me that behind the folding doors of twelve mornington road there slept one so pure and so clean that I could not bear to stand before her squalid or drunken or unshaven or obese now what's he doing there it's a bit over the top the unshaven bit but what is he doing he's paying testimony to his wife

[32 : 40] HG Wells is saying I received by the love of a good woman but if HG Wells can say that about his wife how much more can you and I say that about our senior he's holy and harmless and undefiled and separate from sinners and are we going to be unfaithful to him are we going to sell our souls are we going to go after this woman to go after the world to go their way to sell our souls to the world it's not just breaking rules it's not just offending the taboos of our culture it is to break the heart of the one who died for us it is to bring tears through his eyes and if you are being drawn you may be being enticed by the world just think of that think of that think of the love of God in Jesus on the cross I spoke to a man this week he was a Christian he became a Christian recently and he's in his office in the city and he said this I have to resist the power of the suit it's not the word given in the city it's wrong it's far from wrong is it but if you are going to pursue work and worldly gain at the cost of following Jesus that is unfaithfulness that is the essence of worldliness it's putting anything else in the place of Jesus and in the end you see you will look back and you will think did I really sell my soul for that what have I got to show for it what should it profit a man if he gains the whole world it's impossible to gain the whole world but if you go to the news agent and I go to the news agent and I'll top up my oyster card there's motor world isn't that magazine there's gardening world there's rugby world

I'm sure there's hockey world and all those kind of different world magazines well let me say this what happens if you gain whatever it is that floats your boat you gain that world what is it profit in the end if you shout your soul to that and you have to enter into eternity with no relationship with the God who made you and no relationship with the Lord Jesus who died on the cross don't be surprised don't be seduced it's so appealing isn't it but when you look into the cup of what she's offering it's appalling don't be surprised don't be seduced and whatever you do don't fall for her because if you fall for her you will fall with her when you get into chapter 18 and 19 next week you find that Babylon the greatest fall look at verse 14 as we finish it's a key verse they will make war on the lamb and the lamb will conquer them for he is the lord of lords and king of kings and those who are with him are called and chosen and faithful we've been looking at this woman and the beast and all the sorts of manifestations and incarnations of this woman kings and horns they will make war against the lamb that is what you're up against every morning this is not the ensign battle that is to come that is the battle of today and tomorrow morning and we've got to get up and we've got to fight against the world the flesh and the devil they make war against the lamb and the lamb but the lamb will overcome them because he is lord of lords and king of kings and those who are with him are called there's a lovely story there's different versions of this story but a story about Czechoslovakia when it came out of the communist regime and a Russian lecture was addressing a public audience he's an atheist man addressing a public audience on the doctrine of Christianity communists at that

time were atheistic materialists they didn't believe in God and as far as they were concerned Christianity was a superstition that needed to be stamped out and this man was going around the country giving one of his many lectures on Christianity he spoke at considerable length trying to discredit it and at the end of his talk an orthodox priest asked if he could reply the lecturer quite arrogantly said I'll give you five minutes the priest said I don't need five minutes I only need five seconds he stood up and he said Christ is risen and the whole audience stood on their feet and said he is risen indeed this is the victory that overcomes the world your faith after decades and decades and decades of atheistic propaganda and materialism the lamb still wins and there he is with his chosen faithful followers in what was then communist Czechoslovakia this is the victory that overcomes the world if you belong to the lamb then because he is risen you belong to a kingdom that will never pass away

Christ is risen he is risen indeed let's pray God thank you for your word this book and so big Lord it's such a challenge and yet such a comfort and such encouragement we're like little children paddling in the ocean help us to learn Lord what you have to say to us through this unusual and remarkable book so that we might persevere to the end and we might keep watching and waiting for you to return help us Lord not to be surprised or overtaken by fear help us to know Lord that the lamb wins in fact the victory has already been won help us oh Lord be praised and live every moment of every day this week in the light of that victory looking forward to the final conservation when Jesus will come back again
Amen Amen Thank you.