

# The Revelation of Jesus Christ

## The Destruction of the Harlot

### Revelation 18

#### INTRODUCTION:

Although the sermon is on the entire chapter, I am only going to read the last four verses in our scripture reading this morning. We will read the other verses during the sermon.

#### All Stand and Read Scripture

Revelation 18:21-24 (NASB)

<sup>21</sup> Then a strong angel took up a stone like a great millstone and threw it into the sea, saying, "So will Babylon, the great city, be thrown down with violence, and will not be found any longer. <sup>22</sup> And the sound of harpists and musicians and flute-players and trumpeters will not be heard in you any longer; and no craftsman of any craft will be found in you any longer; and the sound of a mill will not be heard in you any longer; <sup>23</sup> and the light of a lamp will not shine in you any longer; and the voice of the bridegroom and bride will not be heard in you any longer; for your merchants were the great men of the earth, because all the nations were deceived by your sorcery. <sup>24</sup> And in her was found the blood of prophets and of saints and of all who have been slain on the earth."

#### Prayer

Our Father we thank You that You for giving us a glimpse of what is going on spiritually behind the scenes so we can understand the events that are going on physically around us. I pray that through this study that we will truly understand the difference between the temporary pleasure that is offered by Satan and the eternal promises that are given by You. We pray that You, through Your Holy Spirit, will be present in our midst that the message may be driven deep into our minds. Help us to identify Satan's deception and live by Your word.

In Jesus name we pray, Amen.

Revelation was written so Christians could see what is happening spiritually behind the scenes in order to make sense of the physical things that are happening around us.

I would like to start this morning with a quick review of these events happening behind the scenes. We have **now** been introduced to all of the major opponents that are waging war against the church.

#### **The Great Dragon - Satan.**

Revelation 12:9 (NASB)

<sup>9</sup> And the great dragon was thrown down, the serpent of old who is called the devil and Satan, who deceives the whole world; he was thrown down to the earth, and his angels were thrown down with him.

### **The Beast from the Sea - The Antichrist.**

Revelation 13:1a,3-4 (NASB)

The Beast from the Sea - The Antichrist

13 And the dragon stood on the sand of the seashore.

Then I saw a beast coming up out of the sea...<sup>3</sup> **I saw one of his heads as if it had been slain, and his fatal wound was healed.** And the whole earth was amazed *and followed* after the beast; <sup>4</sup> they worshiped the dragon because he gave his authority to the beast; and they worshiped the beast, saying, “Who is like the beast, and who is able to wage war with him?”

This beast symbolizes the Satanically inspired kingdoms and governments of the world that oppose Christ and His church with **persecution**.

### **The Beast from the Earth - The False Prophet.**

Revelation 13:11-12 (NASB)

The Beast from the Earth

<sup>11</sup> Then I saw another beast coming up out of the earth; and **he had two horns like a lamb and he spoke as a dragon.** <sup>12</sup> He exercises all the authority of the first beast in his presence. And he makes the earth and those who dwell in it to worship the first beast, whose fatal wound was healed.

The false prophet works with the dragon and the first beast as an agent of **deception** through worldly institutions and the religions of the world that opposes Christianity to try to draw individuals into worshipping the beast.

He is described as a lamb. Remember, Jesus is the Lamb of God. To the world, the False Prophet looks like someone who will lead us to the savior of the world. Notice that this false prophet never calls attention to himself. He always lifts up the Antichrist and proclaims the Antichrist as the savior of the world.

Satan, the antichrist, and the false prophet are all imitating the trinity of God the Father, Christ the Son, and the Holy Spirit.

### **Babylon the Great - The Harlot.**

She represents the economic and the non-Christian religious forces and systems of the world to oppose the people of God. She uses the **seduction** of immorality and wealth to draw men away from God and into idolatry.

Revelation 17:4 (NASB)

<sup>4</sup> The woman was clothed in **purple and scarlet**, and adorned with **gold and precious stones and pearls**, having in her hand a gold cup full of abominations and of the unclean things of her immorality,

Revelation 18:12 (NASB)

<sup>12</sup> cargoes of **gold** and silver and **precious stones** and **pearls** and **fine linen** and **purple** and silk and **scarlet**, and every *kind of* citron wood and every article of ivory and every article *made* from very costly wood and bronze and iron and marble,

- Gold
- Precious Stones
- Purple and Scarlet
- Pearls
- Fine Linen

This adornment is not given to us only to reflect the attractiveness of the harlot although it is certainly described partially for that reason. *It is like saying that she was standing on the street corner with a miniskirt, low-cut top, and black thigh-high boots. We all are familiar with the identity of those people.* The way she is arrayed are also symbols of wealth and luxury. You have gold, jewels, pearls, and finely dyed fabric. These are used to seduce others into a relationship with her. She uses wealth along with sexual pleasure to pull you away from God and into an idolatrous relationship with worldly things.

With the fine linen we once again see Satan trying to imitate God. The contrast that is being made between the Harlot and the Bride of the Lamb (The True Church). Satan would have us believe that the Harlot is the one that the world should follow.

### The Bride of Christ

Revelation 19:8-9,14 (NASB)

<sup>8</sup> It was given to her to clothe herself in **fine linen**, bright *and* clean; for the **fine linen** is the righteous acts of the saints.

<sup>9</sup> Then he *\*said to me*, "Write, 'Blessed are those who are invited to the marriage supper of the Lamb.'" And he *\*said to me*, "These are true words of God."...

She is a symbol of a culture that is committed above all else of maintaining economic and material well being.

There is nothing wrong with economic well being as long as you see it as a gift and blessing from God. So to commit immorality with her is to trust in the world's economic system as the ultimate source of providing safety, security, and happiness.

So these are the agents that we are warring against...

- The dragon, Satan.
- The Beast from the Sea, Antichrist.
- The Beast from the Earth, The False Prophet.
- Babylon the Great, The Harlot.

Their primary weapons are **persecution, deception, seduction, and wealth.**

These are the methods that Satan and the beasts use to try to deceive men and ultimately destroy the church.

**Let us now look at the fall and destruction of Babylon the Great.**

### **BODY:**

## **I. FALLEN IS BABYLON.**

Revelation 18:1-3 (NASB)

18 After these things I saw another angel coming down from heaven, having great authority, and the earth was illumined with his glory. <sup>2</sup> And he cried out with a mighty voice, saying, "Fallen, fallen is Babylon the great! She has become a dwelling place of demons and a prison of every unclean spirit, and a prison of every unclean and hateful bird. <sup>3</sup> For all the nations have drunk of the wine of the passion of her immorality, and the kings of the earth have committed *acts of* immorality with her, and the merchants of the earth have become rich by the wealth of her sensuality."

Another angel comes down from heaven, carrying great authority and full of glory. He calls out the message of judgment. Babylon is fallen because of its great immoralities.

We were told that chapters 17 and 18 were being written to show us the judgment of the harlot. Now that time has arrived. We were also told that it was the beast that would actually bring her down.

Revelation 17:16-17 (NASB)

<sup>16</sup> And the ten horns which you saw, and the beast, these will hate the harlot and will make her desolate and naked, and will eat her flesh and will burn her up with fire. <sup>17</sup> For God has put it in their hearts to execute His purpose by having a common purpose, and by giving their kingdom to the beast, until the words of God will be fulfilled.

It appears that just before Christ comes again, there will be a global financial crisis. The nations will desire to take the power and wealth for themselves.

## **II. CALL TO GOD'S PEOPLE.**

Revelation 18:4-8 (NASB)

<sup>4</sup> I heard another voice from heaven, saying, "Come out of her, my people, so that you will not participate in her sins and receive of her plagues; <sup>5</sup> for her sins have piled up as high as heaven, and God has remembered her iniquities. <sup>6</sup> Pay her back even as she has paid, and give back *to her* double according to her deeds; in the cup which she has mixed, mix twice as much for her. <sup>7</sup> To the degree that she 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.' <sup>8</sup> 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.

Another voice calls out from heaven for God's people to come out from her. There are several prophetic references from Jeremiah and Isaiah concerning this admonition to us.

Jeremiah 51:6-7 (NASB)

<sup>6</sup> Flee from the midst of Babylon, And each of you save his life! Do not be destroyed in her punishment, For this is the Lord's time of vengeance; He is going to render recompense to her. <sup>7</sup> Babylon has been a golden cup in the hand of the Lord, Intoxicating all the earth. The nations have drunk of her wine; Therefore the nations are going mad.

The call of the voice from heaven is for the people of God to remove themselves from the ways and immoralities of Rome. Do not participate in the sinfulness of that world.

Otherwise, you will share in the plagues that are coming upon Satan and his followers.

God gives an important warning. If you act like the world, you will be judged with the world. Come out from the world and separate yourselves from the world's ways and sins. They have heaped up their sins as high as the heavens and God has remembered those sins. God is going to pay her back. God is going to pay her double for her deeds. This is **just** because her sins were so severe that it not only affected her, but also carried the whole world into sinfulness with its idolatry.

Verses 7-8 continue to explain that the harlot glorified herself and lived in luxury. No one gave glory to God for their prosperity. They elevated themselves and glorified themselves. Further, they think they will never fall.

These verses contain very important messages for our country. The parallels are very frightening. We are full of prosperity and wealth. Compared to much of the world, we are wasteful and live in luxury. Our country shows the same arrogance in thinking that it is the world power that will never fall. Certainly the sins of our nation are heaped as high as heaven. The more this nation turns people away from the true God to worship the worldly systems and religions, the closer we come to receiving God's judgment against us.

### **III. THE LAMENT FOR BABYLON.**

Revelation 18:9-19 (NASB)

<sup>9</sup>“And the kings of the earth, who committed *acts of immorality* and lived sensuously with her, will weep and lament over her when they see the smoke of her burning, <sup>10</sup> standing at a distance because of the fear of her torment, saying, ‘Woe, woe, the great city, Babylon, the strong city! For in one hour your judgment has come.’

<sup>11</sup>“And the merchants of the earth weep and mourn over her, because no one buys their cargoes any more— <sup>12</sup> cargoes of gold and silver and precious stones and pearls and fine linen and purple and silk and scarlet, and every *kind of* citron wood and every article of ivory and every article *made* from very costly wood and bronze and iron and marble, <sup>13</sup> and cinnamon and spice and incense and perfume and frankincense and wine and olive oil and fine flour and wheat and cattle and sheep, and *cargoes* of horses and chariots and slaves and human lives. <sup>14</sup> The fruit you long for has gone from you, and all things that were luxurious and splendid have passed away from you and *men* will no longer find them. <sup>15</sup> The merchants of these things, who became rich from her, will stand at a distance because of the fear of her torment, weeping and mourning, <sup>16</sup> saying, ‘Woe, woe, the great city, she who was clothed in fine linen and purple and scarlet, and adorned with gold and precious stones and pearls; <sup>17</sup> for in one hour such great wealth has been laid waste!’ And every shipmaster and every passenger and sailor, and as many as make their living by the sea, stood at a distance, <sup>18</sup> and were crying out as they saw the smoke of her burning, saying, ‘What *city* is like the great city?’ <sup>19</sup> And they threw dust on their heads and were crying out, weeping and mourning, saying, ‘Woe, woe, the great city, in which all who had ships at sea became rich by her wealth, for in one hour she has been laid waste!’

So to commit immorality with her is to trust in the world's economic system as the ultimate source of providing security and happiness.

In fact these products that we see in verse 12 actually had trade guilds in Rome in the first century. They represented trade unions. There were people who sold linen. There were people who sold gold. There were bankers. Etc., etc. etc. Each one had a trade union.

During John's time, each Roman trade union had a patron God or deity. You had to pay your dues once a year to be a part of that trade union and not be kicked out. You were required to go to a festivity and honor the god that prospered your trade union for the past year. This put the Christians in a bad position. They could not buy or sell unless they honored the trade union god.

#### **IV. THE FAITHFUL REJOICE.**

Chapter 13 showed us that the beast would kill those who did not worship it. The holy people of God, the apostles, and the prophets are called to rejoice over the judgment of the harlot. They are called to rejoice because their blood is finally being avenged. Judgment has come and it is time for the people of God who suffered and died to rejoice.

A great symbolic act is revealed. A mighty angel takes a stone like a great millstone and casts it into the sea. While doing this the angel says that Babylon has been thrown down with violence and will never be found again. The Roman Empire will never rise again and will never be a world power. Those who know the timeline of world history know that the collapse of the Roman Empire led into a time period that would be called the Dark Ages. The world was completely changed with the fall of the Roman Empire. This language is the same as what Jeremiah did concerning the judgment against Babylon.

Jeremiah 51:63-64 (NASB)

<sup>63</sup> And as soon as you finish reading this scroll, you will tie a stone to it and throw it into the middle of the Euphrates, <sup>64</sup> and say, 'Just so shall Babylon sink down and not rise again because of the calamity that I am going to bring upon her; and they will become exhausted.'" Thus far are the words of Jeremiah.

#### **CONCLUSION:**

Do not love the world. Do not live like the world. Do not think like the world Do not act like the world. . Do not dress like the world.

Our hope in this life is in Jesus Christ. He has died on the cross for our sins and we must belong to Him. He is at work in me constantly helping me to avoid the seductions of this world. The Holy Spirit dwells within me. He is preparing a place for us in heaven where we will dwell with Him forever.

That is the hope of every Christian. The world is trying to fill our hungry stomachs with crumbs when we already have filet mignon, lobster, and snow crab (a feast) for us to delight in. That is your hope. Cherish it. Hold it. Embrace it. So that when these other seductive voices come you think, "Are you kidding!, I am going to exchange this banquet for the crumbs that are being offered? Not a chance!"

If you do not have this hope, I urge you to come forward this morning and place your hope in Christ by accepting Him as your Lord and Savior and being baptized for the remission of sins.

**This is the Day!**