**Jesus Defeats Babylon the Great**

Revelation 17:1-18

If you try to read the book of Revelation like you would the Gospels or any narration book, you will become very confused and frustrated. For it will seem that God destroys the wicked numerous times. But what we need to realize is that these are various visions, much of which pertains to the same thing.

Last week, we witnessed the end of God’s wrath, the final plagues. With the seventh bowl, God proclaimed that “It is done.” But in chapters 17-18, we are again looking at the sinful people of the earth, the beast, and Babylon.

Chapter 16 gave us the far off view, the overall result of the bowl judgments, and now in chapter 17 we hone in closer to the details. In these details we are reminded of how attractive idolatry can be, and if our souls long for these things, we will ultimately be destroyed. We are also reminded of the greatness of our King, who by sovereignty and power, will destroy the antigod society that has reigned in every age. Until there is only one kingdom, one God, one faith, one people for all of eternity.

**I. Babylon: The mother of prostitutes**

One of the angels from the previous chapter gives John a closer look at the culture and city that was destroyed by the plagues of God. This alluring woman called a great prostitute has captivated the hearts of the kings and the people of the earth. She is dressed in radiant colors and the most expensive of jewels.

This drunk woman flaunts herself and the lusts of the flesh, the lusts of the eyes, and the pride of life are immediately attracted to her. And like a horseback rider that guides the horse with bit and bridal, this prostitute is in control of the beast and the kings of the world.

The waters upon which she is seated is identified later in the chapter as the nations of the world. That Babylon is not one ethnic group, but a unity of hearts from every tribe and language. This woman is identified as a city, verse 18 calls her a great city dominating over the kings of the earth.

Revelation 18:16 describes this great city wearing the same expensive clothes and jewelry as this prostitute. I’ve read that Roman prostitutes wore a headband with their name inscribed. Here we see this woman bearing on her forehead a mystery. A mystery is that which we could not know unless God revealed.

This mystery shows us that there is an ungodly, wicked kingdom called Babylon, and Babylon is the mother of all prostitutes. Immediately after the account of Noah in the book of Genesis, we find the account of Babel. This empire built by Nimrod was the first of great kingdoms founded upon idolatry and paganism.

This woman is identified by blasphemy, abominations, impurities, and the murder of God’s people. Babylon is the name given to any antichristian society. From Babel in Genesis, rising to Egypt, Assyria, Babylon, Persia, Greece, and finally Rome. She rides the back of this beast with seven heads, identified in verse 10 as seven kings, five of whom are fallen, one that is, and one that is to come. I see these past kingdoms as these heads. Egypt, Assyria, Babylon, Persia, and Greece had fallen. At the time of this writing, Rome was currently domineering the world, drunk of the blood of the martyrs of Jesus, and then this coming kingdom of Babylon.

The beast in verse 8 was described to us in chapter 13. He is the one who gains worldwide power, marveling the world by coming back from a mortal wound. But here in verse 8, John is given the beast’s end, he will go to destruction.

This beast, as the 6th bowl was described in the last chapter, assembles the kings of the world to unite with him by the work of demons. The ten horns here symbolize the ten kings of the world who will throw their power and authority behind the beast.

Verse 11 says that there are seven kings, which I just described, and the antichrist is the 8th because belongs to the 7th, because he will take it by force.

God is showing us a full history of mankind in a unit. Satan is blinding the eyes of unbelievers and raising himself a kingdom, Babylon, that will overthrow the kingdom of God.

1 John 4:1-3

This beast, in one mind with the ten kings, will wage war on the saints of God but only because they want to take down their King, the Lamb of God.

Psalm 2:1-3

The kings of the earth unite to break God’s hold on them. They do not want to submit to the authority of the Lord and will fight to their deaths to overthrow God’s throne.

**II. Jesus: The King of kings**

They will make war on the Lamb, and the Lamb will conquer them. Why will he conquer them? Because he is the Lord of lords and the King of kings. All authority has been given to me, Jesus said in the book of Matthew. This name is written on his robe and thigh in that glorious picture of our King in Revelation 19. The King of kings and Lord of lords. How preeminent is he over the kings of the world? Even the most powerful of kings?

Proverbs 21:1

The Lord directed the heart of Pharaoh so that his mighty power could be displayed for all to see. He directed the heart of Cyrus so that the temple could be rebuilt. Over history God’s plan has always been fulfilled and no might nor power can withstand the directing hand of God.

Here’s another example. The beast and the ten kings will turn on Babylon and hate her. We aren’t given much in reasons that led up to this or why this occurred. My guess is found in 2 Thessalonians 2:3-4.

The antichrist refuses to share his glory with any other, and so he eliminates anything that steals worship from him. I believe because of Daniel 7 that he will have three kings put to death, and this will force the others to join him in this rampage. He will tear down Babylon and all that allures the souls of men.

The prostitute, Babylon, exercised dominion of all the kings because she is the heart of idolatry. 2 Thessalonians would go on to say that those who follow after the beast are strongly delusional under the power of Satan, and they will not believe the truth but found pleasure in unrighteousness.

Babylon offered all fleshly fulfillment. Riches, houses, sexual gratification, clothes, drinking, etc. The wickedness of Sodom and Gomorrah in its fullness.

And Babylon will be what their souls long for.

For what will it profit a man if he gains the whole world and forfeits his soul? The answer is that he will profit eternal loss. For fallen, fallen is Babylon the Great. After centuries of power, under different names, in different places, it will forever perish. And all those who succumb to her temptations, will perish with her.

Psalm 110

**Application**

Our focus can easily be on the prostitute and the beast, but like always, we find that this chapter is given to exalt the name of Jesus Christ. He is the target of all humanistic societies, and yet he is the Great Conqueror. Not only is every human soul subject to him, but the rulers of the invisible realm, and even life and death itself.

Revelation 1:17-18

So, to whom does your soul long for? What captivates your thoughts? What holds the affections of your heart? Is Babylon stealing your attention, implanting in you cravings for the pleasures and perks of the world? Is the economy keeping your attention? Retirement, marriage, recreation, sex?

You see the Babylon, though not a physical city here now, still allures us, tempts us. And if we are not careful, if we are not alert, we will fall into bed with the great prostitute. And condemnation will immediately be placed on us by Jesus Christ.

Or does the King of all kings capture your attention? Is his glory and his righteousness where your eyes are fixed? Is his victory your anthem?

One kingdom will not last, and the other cannot be shaken. Is your name written in the Lamb’s book of life, through repentance and faith, have you received the grace of Jesus offered to you today? As we celebrate his death and resurrection, may we marvel at his power and authority.

Take warning please.

Proverbs 5:1-11