

22b REV

Let's pick up our study in Revelation chapter 18. The chapter begins by saying, After these things I saw another angel coming down from heaven. We'll come back to that language, because as always, even the connecting words and phrases and these details are important.

But, we ended chapter 17, the woman which you saw is that great city which reigns over the kings of the earth. Now, I'm going to suggest to you, based on the stuff we talked about in the last session, that this city is not necessarily a literal city. It is a symbolic element.

There's no one city that has ruled over the kings of the earth down through history. But, what is the picture of a city? It's an organized, integral, interconnected, sort of self-sustaining entity populated by people. Remember in the ancient world, the role of a city.

We say city now and we think, well, Milwaukee, Chicago, LA, New York, Detroit. But, in the ancient world, most people were out in the sticks, in rural areas, and the city was the place for the rich and powerful. If you could afford to live in the city, it's because you were running some sort of business.

You had enough wealth that you didn't need to live off the land and raise crops and have, you know, this is an agricultural milieu, an agricultural type of environment, and you go out and you scratch your living out of the ground. And, if you're living in a city, generally speaking, you're a part of something bigger and grander. So, when it talks about this great city which reigns over the kings of the earth, you know, you think of a great king of the earth reigning over a city.

You don't think of a city reigning over the king. But, if it's reigning over kings, this is one city, it's one organized, self-sustaining, rich and powerful collective ruling the kings of the earth. What is that rich and powerful collective? It is this system of false religion that has aggrandized itself, has accumulated wealth and power to itself by manipulating and influencing and working in and through government.

One of the ways that our founding fathers rightly staved this off in our country is by ensuring that our government would make no law respecting the establishment of a religion. And, this has come to be known as the Establishment Clause or the separation of church and state. It was never designed to be the separation of church and state in that the state could have no church, but government was not to endorse or otherwise foment religion.

You have government over here, you have religion over here. Religion is not supposed to be using the government like a sock puppet to get its work done. And, that's what they saw in England where the Episcopal Church was, you know, working on the king or the

queen and keeping them from doing what they're supposed to do.

So, after these things, chapter 18 now, I saw another angel coming down from heaven, no longer talking to the bowl angel. The whole bowl judgment thing is explained now. Another angel coming down from heaven having great authority and the earth was illuminated with his glory.

This is a big time angel, one of the biggest. You could argue that this is Michael perhaps. It doesn't say, we don't know.

We'll find out when we watch this live. He cried mightily with a loud phonay, with a loud voice saying, Babylon the great is fallen, is fallen and has become a dwelling place of demons, a prison for every foul spirit, a cage for every unclean and hated bird. All the nations have drunk of the wine of the wrath of fornication.

Kings of the earth have committed fornication with her. The merchants of the earth risked the abundance of her luxury. Now, three-fold description of devastation and desolation.

Three-fold description of the reason. Notice that the word is fallen is repeated. Why is it repeated? This is the biggest fall that's ever been observed of this type.

So, you have the arist from pipto, which is to fall. Arist is a point in time that has passed. It doesn't actually say has fallen, that would be a perfect.

It says, epason, epason, Babylon, he megale. Fell, fell, Babylon the great. That's what it says in Greek.

It doesn't say has fallen, it says fell. Arist normally is going to be taken as a point in past time, but not always. A perfect tense is past time, and that's how they translated it here, has fallen.

But the arist tense in Greek is a funny thing. It's not so much related to time as it is related to your view of the action. Is your view of the action continuous? Then it's a present tense.

Is it rolled up into one package and looked at as a whole? That's the arist. It's really tough to get the arist tense across in English because we don't really have an equivalent. But the arist tense, let me just give you three basic kinds of arist.

If you ever listen to Bob Thieme, you know this already. There's ingressive, constative, and culminative. Ingressive, all arist tenses take the action and basically look at it apart from time.

You're not talking about was it yesterday, is it tomorrow, where is it now? You're saying, I had a sponge full of water, and I squeezed the sponge and all the water came out. Now,

did I squeeze it yesterday, am I squeezing it now, will I squeeze it tomorrow? I don't know from the arist. The arist says the act of squeezing the sponge and the water coming out, that's the action.

Now, if it's, and you have to determine the kind of arist from context. It can either emphasize the beginning of the action, the progress of the action, or the end of the action. Ingressive talks about the beginning.

As I begin to squeeze and the sponge compresses and water begins to drip out, that would be an ingressive arist. I look at the beginning. Constatative looks at the whole process where I slowly change the volume of that sponge and force the water out of it, all the way from beginning to end.

Culminative would look at the result, where I'm basically standing there with the squeezed sponge in a wet hand, and it's kind of a done deal. But all three of those, or any one of those, could be expressed by the arist. Now, if I want to emphasize that this is finished, with results that go on, I would use the perfect tense.

I would say the sponge has been squeezed. That would be the perfect. If I wanted to say that it's in the future, I'd say it will be squeezed.

I'd use the future tense. If I wanted to really emphasize the durative action, this sponge is being squeezed. Maybe all sponges are squeezed.

It's a universal principle. I would use the present tense. Well, wisdom is known by her children.

That's in the present tense, because it's sort of a timeless principle, and it's in the present. Wisdom is known, is being known. 1 John 1.9, if we are confessing our sins, present tense.

When you're expressing a principle that is sort of universal and is sort of always true, you often find it in the present tense. If we are confessing our sins, or if we keep on confessing our sins, he keeps on being faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to keep on cleansing us from all unrighteousness. Anyway, this is an heiress.

Fallen, fallen, Babylon the Great. The reason I say that is, there is a question about, is this a different judgment than the one we just saw in 17? There are people who say it's different than what we saw in chapter 17, verses 16 and 17, where she gets yanked off the beast and ripped up and is naked and all destroyed. The woman in chapter 17, this is false religion as it relates to political power.

The kings, the mountains, empire, governance. That's what the beast with the heads, that's what the mountains, that's what a city really represents is governance, right? This is the same judgment. This is kind of the seals, trumpets, and bowls thing.

Same judgment, if you read a Bible knowledge commentary, it says, oh, different judgment. Well, I'm going to disagree with everybody and say it's the same judgment, but it's from a different angle. Rather than looking at the judgment of Babylon in the sense of false religion and its political tentacles, now we're going to look at false religion from a different perspective.

This is economic. This is cultural, not political. Now, look at what it says.

Babylon the Great, fallen, fallen, or fell, fell, and has become a dwelling place. This is also an heiress. It's the act of becoming all rolled up into one thing.

Has become a dwelling place of demons, a prison for every foul spirit, and a cage for every unclean and hated bird. Three different pictures. And I ask myself, why? Why can't it just be an unclean bird roost? Why is it also a dwelling place of demons? Why is it also a prison for every foul spirit? Is there a difference in a foul spirit and a demon? And an unclean bird? Are they three different things? Or are they different views of the same thing? We'll get to that in a minute.

Verse 3, For all the nations have done what? Drunk the wine of her fornication, the wrath of her fornication. Kings of the earth have committed fornication with her, and the merchants of the earth have become rich through the abundance of her luxury. Three things.

A. All nations, it's the wine of the wrath of her fornication. Now, what kind of problem is that? What does this fornication represent? Of course, you have actual fornication, all kinds of illicit, perverted things, and that can be a manifestation of this. But what is at its core, at its essence, what is this fornication talking about? This cup of fornication that this woman keeps handing out.

Fornication is a sin against what basic institution? Marriage. It is the covenant between a man and a woman. I am going to live with you, and the two are going to become one flesh, and anything outside of that is fornication.

You can do it before you're married, you can do it after you're married, you can do it while you're married, it doesn't matter. You're sinning against that fundamental divine institution. For this cause shall a man leave father and mother and cleave unto his wife, and the two shall be one flesh.

That's the model, that's the goal. And it is a picture in the spiritual realm of covenant relationship with God and faithfulness to that covenant. And you don't go trust in other things, and you don't stray away from your fealty, your loyalty.

I plight thee my troth, you say, if you do the old-fashioned wedding vow. Plight means to pledge, and troth is truth. I pledge you my integrity, is what you say.

I give you my word of honor that I will be true to you till death do us part in all of its details, sickness and health, rich or poor, and so on. So, this fornication in chapter 17 and 18, what is it? It is faith in something other than God. That's fornication because you're supposed to be in covenant relationship with God and be faithful to Him and Him only.

Anything else is fornication. So, the wine of the wrath of her fornication, this is the cup of God's wrath poured out because these people are godless. They are pornia in the spiritual sense.

So, A is spiritual consequence. B, it says the kings of the earth have committed fornication with her. The kings of the earth.

What have they done? They have perverted their ruling power. God constantly is getting onto the princes of Judah and the kings of Israel and so on because they have perverted their power for selfish gain and they are treading down poor people. They are not only sinning against the people but they are sinning against God.

So, this is the political side. This is the domination of people at the expense. This is another divine institution, the institution of nations.

You have family and marriage all wrapped up. You have nations and that has been perverted, fornicated against. Then finally, the merchants of the earth have become rich through the abundance of her luxury.

This is the economic perversion. This is the enriching of self, the greed factor, all of these in and through this woman, false religion. And you see this all over the place.

You see it in Protestant evangelical Christianity, quote unquote, when you look on TV and see people with their golden bathtub faucets and their fancy cars and their big salaries and their hollow shell of fake Christianity and people are sending them thousands and hundreds of thousands of dollars every year to support their quote unquote, ministry. And their ministry is nothing more than a big shell game. It's like an excuse to ask for donations.

So, all down through history, this has taken place all down through history, false religion, the worship of whatever gods you want to name, has been put to these ends. Satan loves to see it distract people from an acknowledgement of the true God. Kings love to use it as leverage to get people to be obedient and to hold their empire together.

That's why Constantine chose Christianity. It wasn't that he was a big time believer in the Bible. He just thought this is the most prevalent thing.

Christianity is the one religion out of all of these options that tells people to obey the king and pray for him and to not be rebellious. So, that sounds like a good one to me.

Let's all be Christians.

And then the economic greed factor. How many entities have enriched themselves by saying, send me your tithes and offerings. So, that's what you have here.

That reminded me of a good point that we touched on last week in terms of the identity and the manifestation of this woman who rides the beast, this false religion. We talked last week about how it often appears in the form of a woman like the Virgin Mary or Semiramis and these virginal cults all the way down. You have Venus.

You have Ashtar. They're all really the same basic perversion all the way down. God said the seed of the woman is going to prevail.

And Satan has taken that and perverted it. He has a false savior. He has a false resurrection.

He has a false God. He has falsified and counterfeited true facts of God's plan and purpose in human history to make it tough to tell the difference. And people who don't look carefully, people who have only a shallow and casual interest will be deceived, will be fooled, will go down the wrong road because God has designed true faith to require sustained interest and to manifest itself in a sustained way.

Momentary faith is like the plant that grows up in a day and then wilts in the sunshine. So now let's go back a little bit and look at verse 2. Babylon, the greatest fallen, has become a dwelling place. Demons, foul spirits, unclean and hated birds.

The wine of the wrath of a fornication, dwelling place of demons. If you just line these up, the three types of things that are the dwelling place and the three reasons down below, just line up demons with number A there. Instead of worship of God in spirit and in truth, you have demon-inspired worship.

And you know that many religions of the earth get into demonism even today. Dave Hunt has a book called Demons in the World Today or somebody does. I have it on my shelf.

I think it's a Dave Hunt book. Look at the second element. A prison for every foul spirit.

And you have that lining up with the kings of the earth committing fornication with her. What is a foul spirit? This is the Greek word thulake. P-H-U-L-A-K-E And this is the keep.

This is the holding place. A thulake is related to guard or guarding and hence the translation prison. But it is a guarded place.

It is a security compound. If you will. And then you have the very same adjective as you had in the first.

It was a dwelling place of demons. That's literally unclean spirits. Pneumatos.

Akathartu. You know, catharsis. They say, oh, I went to the play and I had a catharsis.

I had a cleansing of the soul. Well, akatharsis is uncleanness. And so you have a pneumatos, akatharsis.

It's an unclean spirit. A dwelling place of unclean spirits. A prison or a guarded place for every unclean ornetu.

Ornetu. And this is a bird. It says a foul spirit, but this is a bird.

And then you have in the third line, it is also a keep or a guarded place. And then it says, same word, fulake, for every unclean theriu. And a therion is just a beast or an animal.

It excludes humans. So we have three things here. We have unclean spirits, we have unclean birds, and we have unclean beasts.

Unclean spirits, unclean birds, and unclean beasts. So you have unclean spirits. You move down the ladder of altitude.

Spirits float around in heaven. Birds float around in the sky. Beasts crawl around on the ground.

And so you have this negative vertical movement, if you will, from the heights of heaven to the sky to the ground. Hence, Babylon the Great is fallen, is fallen. Flying around up in the sky, in the heavens, to the sky, to the ground.

Sound effects for you there, because they can't put them in the Bible. For all the nations have drunk the wine of the wrath of her fornication. This is the spiritual responsibility that mankind has.

This is looking toward heaven, where the spirit realm is. Failure in that area. The kings of the earth, these are the rulers, who are the loftiest in human civilization, have committed fornication with her.

And the merchants of the earth, your base desires, your carnal, earthly, fleshly things, abundance of luxury. Okay, that covers the first three verses. And you can see that this is a very graphic picture.

This is a vision that's given to John. He hears that voice, then he hears another voice in verse four saying, Come out of her, my people, lest you share in her sins, and lest you receive of her plagues. Now this only makes sense, because remember, God's already called the true church out at the rapture.

You've got the 144,000 servants, and they have already fled into the hills. So in one

sense, in one sense could God say, Come out of her, my people, unless we are looking at this woman all down through history. All seven heads of the beast, all seven hills of the kingdoms of the earth.

And this is not limited to that last few years of the 70th week of Daniel. God says throughout history, Come out of her, my people, lest you share in her sins, and lest you receive of her plagues. For her sins have reached to heaven.

We're back up in the heavens again, in the heavenly realms. God has remembered her iniquities. This is how this whole scene began back in chapter 17.

The sins reaching up to heaven. God has remembered her iniquities. In fact, at the end of chapter 16, Great Babylon was remembered before God to give her the cup of the wine of the fierceness of his wrath.

God has remembered her iniquities. Now, why would God need to remember if it was just now going on? I mean, it's not like God needs that caffeine boost for his short-term 40-second memory. God has remembered the iniquities of false religion going all the way back to the Tower of Babel, which is the archetypal Babylon.

And then that fulfillment of Babylon, as I mentioned, the first great religious entity to actually oppress the people of God and force them to worship something other than himself. Render to her just as she rendered to you and repay her double according to her works in the cup which she has mixed, mix double for her. In the measure that she glorified herself and lived luxuriously, in the same measure give her torment and sorrow, for she says in her heart, I sit as queen and am no widow and will not see sorrow." What does this mean? I sit as queen and am no widow and will not see sorrow.

This goes all the way back. If I had time, we would go back to Isaiah. There's a chapter that talks about this very same thing and mentions not being a widow.

The idea is, if you're a queen and you're a widow, how did you get your power? Your husband was the king, he died and now you're on the throne. But I'm the queen and I'm no widow. I got here on my own, so to speak, and I am not beholden to any king.

This is the root of authority rejection. You read Corinthians, you read about the necessity for people to respect the authority that has been appointed over them. Here is the epitome of casting off of authority.

This is religion that has cast off the authority of God, as it were. This is the Mary that is not beholden to God or to Jesus. It's the other way around.

Mary speaks and God listens. Mary is the Merrill Lynch of the spiritual world. Mary speaks and everybody listens.

So, you pray to Mary or pray to some other saint and they are your lawyer. They're going to go get things done for you. Well, that's not what it is.

She says in her heart, I sit as queen and am no widow. I am beholden to no man for my power and will not see sorrow. I can dally with these.

I just saw a thing where they were talking about how so many stars in Hollywood are all having children and are being very upfront about it and they're not married to their partner. Tom Cruise, his girlfriend is having a baby and Gwyneth Paltrow is having another baby and all of these different actors and actresses are having families and they are not married. And so, they asked some social commentary, well, why is this? They said, well, with the greater and greater acceptance of the idea that they don't want to tie themselves down.

They don't want the obligation but they do want to spread their genes into the pool and have offspring but they don't want to tie themselves down with the obligations of marriage. And it used to be that if there was a pregnancy or something, everybody kind of kept it under wraps because there used to be a name for children that were born out of wedlock that was not very complimentary. And now, it's celebrated.

Oh, let's have a shower. I'm having a child and I'm not even married. Well, this is the idea here.

I am no widow and will not see sorrow. There's no downside to me having these dalliances and giving off, having these offspring, giving off harlots but being the mother of harlots. I'm the progenitor or progenitoress of all of these others that are just like me and I'm not married and I'm not a widow.

I'm just out here fornicating with the kings of the earth and here's all these little spawn of the devil religions. Therefore, her plagues will come in one day. Death and mourning and famine and she will be utterly burned with fire.

Notice even these three judgments, death and mourning and fire, correspond. Death corresponds to that whole spiritual arena. Mourning is I've lost my power, my authority and my sway on the earth and famine, all of that economic prosperity that I was getting and the traders and the merchants of the earth, that's all gone.

So, there's these three different areas track all the way through, the spiritual arena, the political arena and the economic arena. All of them will be judged in one day. She will be utterly burned with fire for strong is the Lord God who judges her.

Now, point of application. God tells His people to come forth from false religion and it doesn't matter what it calls itself. It doesn't matter how many trappings it has.

It doesn't matter how many times they say praise God or dear Jesus or I love the Holy

Ghost or whatever else they may say. If it's false religion, we are called to come out from it and that's one of the reasons that we are a non-denominational independent church. And we do not so much as put a cross on the front of our little porta-pulpit because there is no reason to interpose something between believers who are priests who have the Word of God and the Spirit of God.

There's no reason to interpose anything between you and God. You are not accountable to me and there's only a few ways in which I am accountable to you. We are all accountable directly to God and there is to be no intermediate structure, no priests, no fathers, no ecumenical movement, no obstacles.

Jesus Christ is a high priest after the order of Melchizedek and you and I are all priests and we go boldly before the throne of grace individually and represent ourselves before God. You can't blame me for your spiritual life and you can't blame any other pastor or any other teacher. It's your job to get yourself fed and represent yourself before God and His throne.

Anyone who sets themselves up and says, I am going to be the authority for you, I am going to be your denominational, I am going to be your local church authority and I am going to run your life. A church only exists as a local church, only exists as a place where believer priests come together and serve as mutual blessings to one another. Spiritual gifts mingle.

Each should regard the other as better than himself. We should look out for the interests of others and if anyone can teach, let him teach. If anyone can wash the feet of the saints, let him wash the feet of the saints.

But there is no structure, there is no hierarchy. Jesus told this to the disciples. It wasn't even the church age yet and He said, Let no man call you father, for there is one father and he is up in heaven.

That's why I refuse to let anybody call me reverend. Think about it. Revered one, reverend, drives me up the wall.

It's explicitly forbidden in Scripture. Let no man call you something special. And I am not reverend, I am not revered, I am not somehow glowing in the dark in some spiritual sense.

That's a Catholic idea. That's an evil idea. That's the woman riding the beast assigning some special significance to some religiously viewed hierarchy.

That's the woman riding the beast and it's of the devil. It's the harlot giving birth to harlots. So, we avoid that.

I am the lance corporal slinging the hash on the mess decks and you are the privates

and lance corporals and sergeants coming in and getting your chow and being the marines who are going to go out and pull the triggers and kill the enemies and take the high ground. That's what we all do. We eat the chow and then we go forth conquering and to conquer.

Overcoming in a good way. So, it says that when this Babylon woman harlot false religion caves in, the merchants of the earth will weep and mourn. Now we are getting the details of the economic consequence.

Weep and mourn for no one buys their merchandise anymore. Merchandise of gold and silver, precious stones and pearls, fine linen and purple, silk and scarlet, every kind of citron wood, every kind of ivory, every kind of precious wood, bronze, iron, marble, cinnamon, incense, fragrant oil, frankincense, wine, oil, fine flour, wheat, cattle, sheep, horses, chariots, bodies and souls of men. Human enslavement as a part of this system.

You can see this all down through every one of these. You can find an analog and a fulfillment. Now, what does it mean to us? What is our point of application? Okay, I'll stay away from big time denominationally heavy churches and then what? What is this whole economic thing? Is there a point of application for us? Is there any economic impact in terms of our individual lives as believers and as priests before God? Well, keep reading.

Look at verse 14. The fruit that your soul longed for has gone from you, and all the things which are rich and splendid have gone from you, and you shall find them no more at all. If people have gotten into religion because they are materialistic, that is going to be taken away.

They thought it was going to be gainful. There are people who go into religion because they think it's a rabbit's foot. That's becoming pretty quaint.

I guess nobody really talks about rabbit's feet anymore. When I was little, lots of people had a rabbit's foot on their keychain and all that. Has anybody seen a rabbit's foot? I guess all the animal rights people have pretty well ruled that out.

So, I don't know what the good luck charm is now. Well, I guess it's a St. Christopher hanging off your rear view mirror or something. But people, a lot of times, will go to church and they kind of have the idea that well, I tip my hat to God and then he's going to tip his hat to me and I'll have business prosperity.

I'll have good luck because I've gone and said some Hail Marys or lit a candle or plunked some money in. I gave to charity or whatever. And God will see that and it will kind of balance out the scales.

And I'll have a good life. My economy is going to be better because I've kind of thrown some karma in the direction of spiritual things. This is what people think.

The fruit that your soul longed for has gone from you. This is our point of application. Most of us, we're not in any danger of going off in some goofy religious direction or you wouldn't be here.

But what we do is oftentimes function unaware that we have these longings and these desires. And we tend to focus on something. Our soul longs for it.

It might be security. It might be possession. It might be relationship.

It might be some component of human life that we think if I could get this... A lot of single girls that I knew when I was young and single felt like if I could get married, I would be so happy. I'm 23 and I'm not married yet. I'm an old maid.

I'm 24. I'm a really old... I'm 25. I'm ancient.

I'll never be married. Of course, if you get all the way up to 30, why, you know, that's just the odds are only 1 in 10 that anybody's going to keep you from being an old maid. Whatever it is that your soul longs for, what is our soul supposed to long for? Remember David in the Psalms talking about, O Lord, my soul pants for You as a deer pants for water.

Read Psalm 119. If you want to see the desire of the heart, you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, all your soul, and all your strength. If we fix our affection on some other thing, any other thing, we know better.

We're believers. We know that God is our refuge and strength, our ever-present help in time of trouble. We memorized Psalm 91.

God wants to cover us with His feathers and have us take refuge under His wings. But if there's some other fruit, notice it's called fruit. What was the first goof up in the human race? Longing for fruit.

Eve looked at the tree and saw that it was desirable to make one wise. Sometimes we just want some kind of personal accomplishment or personal attainment. Whatever it may be, the fruit that your soul longed for has gone from you.

All the things which are rich and splendid have gone from you, and you shall find them no more at all. The odd thing is, like Jesus said, if you abandon all and take up your cross and follow Him, all of these things are added unto us. It is at the point that we give up all ambition of that which our soul longs for and say, I am going to turn my attention and my focus on pleasing God in my life.

That is the point at which it's just the strangest, ironic thing. To the extent that we don't care about the fruit that our soul longs for, that's the extent to which God can give it to us because it won't distract us and it won't deflect us and it won't stop us and slow us

down and destroy us. The more we don't care about it, the more God can give it to us because we're focused on Him.

So if you remember one thing out of these two sessions tonight, look at verse 14. The fruit that your soul longs for is what's going to go from you. The things which are rich and splendid are going to go from you, and you will find them no more at all if that's what you set your sights on.

If that's what you're after, the faster you run, the faster it's going to recede. It's when you stop and turn around and forget that stuff that it's going to start overtaking us from behind. God can give it to us.

Jesus told the disciples, if you give up family and houses and land for my sake, you're going to have it a hundredfold in the kingdom because God can give it to you and it doesn't mess you up. This is the problem with false religion. It makes promises it can't keep and it keeps you from seizing and claiming the promises that only God can keep.

And that's why this woman offers the cup of fornication. That's why so many people have drunk it and are going to be weeping and wailing and gnashing their teeth as a result. The merchants of these things who became rich by her will stand at a distance for fear of her torment, weeping and wailing and saying, alas, alas, we don't want to be in that group.

But it's an individual decision. Everybody can make it. All we have to do is look at the truth of the Word of God, grow in grace and knowledge of the Savior and avail ourselves of the work of Jesus Christ.

Well, we'll pick up here in Revelation 18 next time. Father, thank You for the truth of Your Word. Thank You for the clear way, whether it's in the past or in the future, that these truths are illustrated.

We pray that God the Holy Spirit will impress them on our hearts. We ask it in Jesus' name. Amen.