

24a REV

This is the 27th of January, 2006. We continue tonight our study in the book of Revelation, picking up in Revelation chapter 18 and moving into chapter 19. This is a fascinating forward look, but not very far forward.

We have seen the seeds and the roots and the growing foundation for a lot of these things in our own time. And by coming to an understanding of what is here, we can interpret the signs of the times and it does, or certainly can, make a difference in the way we live from day to day and the things that we watch out for through our own perception. But let's take a moment as we begin our study to go to the Lord in prayer.

Father, we are always grateful for your grace, your mercies which are renewed every morning, your forgiveness and cleansing that give us a clean slate and a fresh start and the opportunity to grow. We are comforted and encouraged by the fact that you do not withhold your mercy, you don't withhold your presence, you don't withhold your provision from us, waiting until we are mature and complete and perfect, but you work in our lives and work through circumstances to teach us all along the way. We thank you for the passage that is before us tonight.

We ask for wisdom and understanding to see not only its objective meaning, but also the application that it has for each one of us as we seek to live in a way that is pleasing in your sight. We pray it in Jesus' name. Amen.

Amen. We have seen that this great prostitute is very symbolic. There are two whole chapters here in Revelation devoted to this lady.

This is at the culmination of the seven seals, the seven trumpets and the seven bowls. One of the bowl angels introduces this lady and says, look, here's the beast with the seven heads and the ten horns and here's this woman riding around on it and she's adorned and so forth. And all of chapter 18 concentrates on her and so we have slowed down to take a little bit closer look and make sure that we understand because this is one of the big points of the book of Revelation.

And when you think about it, there's a lot to think about because this harks back and draws language and imagery from the Old Testament. In fact, from some passages that we have recently studied such as in the book of Ezekiel, it goes back to the letters to the seven churches and draws on imagery of Jezebel. And we recognize the fact that although this is prophecy and it's talking about a specific generation and a specific man-made religious entity toward the end of the 70th week of Daniel, it represents and teaches us about man-made religion going all the way back to its invention.

Where did man-made religion really get its start? At the Tower of Babel. When you go back and think about where religion, false religion began to distort and pervert and lead

people astray once the nation of Israel came into being. They haven't been in the wilderness very long at all before they're at Sinai and Moses is up on the mountain getting the truth from God and the people sat down to eat and rose up to play and end up with the golden calf.

And that is the beginning of false worship in Israel. And they're not even a year old. And there they are.

And so it is fitting when we are sensitive to the chiastic nature of God's revelation and unfolding of history, that in the same way that Israel begins very soon after its deliverance with a battle against false religion at the foot of Mount Sinai and ever after, that the age of Israel will conclude with a similar struggle with false religion and a struggle with false worship. And that is the resolution of the problems that have plagued that nation ever since its inception. They were delivered out of Egypt with its false gods, under a mighty hand of God with the ten plagues and so on, only to turn right around and freely of their own accord embrace false religion, make their own golden calf and so on.

So Revelation chapter 18. And we see that this is of course introduced in Revelation chapter 17 and we saw the spiritual picture there. She's riding the dragon and all that.

And then in 18 we see that this is largely presented from an economic point of view. The fall of Babylon the Great is presented almost exclusively in terms of its economics, what it does to the merchants. And why is that? What is the motivation for false religion? If you're not going to accept God and worship Him, you're not interested, what are you interested in? You're greedy.

You're after something that will satisfy you. It can be money, it can be power, it can be influence, it can be fame, it can be gratification, entertainment, stimulation, all kinds of things. But instead of God being God, human emotion becomes God.

I want my emotions to be stimulated, to be giving me a pleasant experience. Now, why is that important? Well, think about us. We are trying, all of us especially, we're trying to stick to that narrow road that leads to the straight gate of life.

We're trying to reflect God's glory in our lives. This skyines us. This makes us a target because Satan and the whole satanic agenda is to neutralize, to divert, to distract, to render harmless and ineffective believers.

And he's been hugely successful and we are our own worst enemy and a lot of us need no help from Satan. We don't need any demons riding our shoulder. We can go astray all by ourselves and Satan says great.

And he's got lots of pleasing scenarios. He is at work in denominations. He's at work in churches large and small.

He's at work in Christian communities and Christian parachurch organizations to blunt the point of the spear, to get people's eyes on something other than the fields that are white for harvest, that harvest of righteousness, to claim God's righteousness by faith, minute by minute, hour by hour, day by day. That's why we're here. We went through 16 chapters in Romans, seeing the emphasis from the beginning to the end of that book on why we are Christians, why God gives us air to breathe and food to eat and keeps us alive on this earth.

It is to swim in the swamp that is human life and claim righteousness by faith. That's why we're here. But where do you hear that message? Faith is redefined and misunderstood.

The Christian life and its goals are redefined and misunderstood and it becomes a lot of other things. So, it is critically important for us to not let ourselves be blinded, not be distracted, not be fooled, not be led astray, not be gazing at the tree of the knowledge of good and evil and thinking it's a good deal to reach out and eat the fruit. This woman with her dazzling apparel, her gold, her pearls, her scarlet adornments is stunning.

John himself is astonished when he sees her and he gets a little bit of a chiding. He gets a little bit of upbraiding. He gets a little bit of a scolding where the angel who's standing by says, why are you amazed? Hey, you know, it's kind of like a whop in the side of the head.

Hey, don't be entranced here. But she's dazzling. That's the nature of the woman on the beast is to dazzle and distract and even John is sort of mesmerized by this vision and the guy says, hey, John, pay attention.

I'm about to tell you something. Well, we saw this in chapter 17 and the spiritual ramifications of this being the harlot, the one who has children out of wedlock, who does everything outside the plan and purpose of God is then described in economic terms in chapter 18. But it's important for us because if you simply say, well, the problem, the danger is the Roman Catholic Church or the problem and the danger is false systems of human religion.

We will miss the point because it's easy to say, well, that problem is over there and I don't have it. This is what happened when Jesus was talking to the Pharisees, when Jesus was preaching to the crowds and remember when Jesus was talking to them and he said, he was talking about those who are blind and able to see and not able to see and the Pharisees came up and they said, well, are we blind also? And Jesus said, if you were blind, you would have no sin. But because you say we see, your sin remains.

You don't admit that you are poor and miserable and blind and naked. You remember the last of the seven letters to the churches? And the danger is that we're going to be looking over there saying, look at those messed up people. Look at these that are missing the point.

Look at these that don't study the scripture from the original language. Look at these that don't study categorically or isagogically or exegetically or look at these people that are hand wavers and strange oids over here. And the problem is always over there or here's somebody in my periphery that has a problem.

And we don't stop and make sure that we are looking into the perfect law of liberty and looking at our own reflection. You know how people take the mirror and tip it so they're looking. It's like a rear view mirror.

I want to see who's behind me. I want to see who's beside me. We're supposed to be looking and getting our own reflection.

And it's our nature. It's your nature. It's my nature to not want to look straight into the glass and accept the fact that we need a change, that we don't measure up to the standard of the glory of God.

All have sinned and fallen short. And it's a hard thing. Nobody enjoys that.

But look at the difference between women in the patriarchal society and men in the patriarchal society. I was reading a commentary. I bought an entire book.

I was over at Half Price Books and I found this great big fat book and it was called Babylon is Fallen or Fallen is Babylon. And I thought, wow, we're doing Revelation. This will be great.

And it's a commentary on Revelation. Big thick thing. So earlier this week I was looking through there and I went to the commentary on chapter 17 and chapter 18.

I was reading about the woman riding the beast and all of that. Well, this commentator is convinced that it's Rome and no two ways about it. But then he started launching off in all of this stuff about how, well, in the ancient world women really get short shrift because the woman and her sexual sins are touted all through the Old Testament and people are called harlots and prostitutes.

It's never the man who is getting a brow beating for his being profligate and a waste role and all that. It's the women. The women are harlots and bad and cities and civilizations are characterized as these wanton women.

And the Bible just takes a dim view of women. And this was the person's position. I thought, well, there's some money wasted on this commentary after all.

Because if you read carefully and if you don't come to the Word of God with a prejudice and a preconceived idea, men get slapped all over the place in the Bible also. How many times does it say son of Belial in the Old Testament? It doesn't talk about daughter of Belial. The children of Israel that are constantly being reprimanded by God.

In Hebrew, that's sons of Israel. B'nai haYisrael. It's not banot.

It's not bat Yisrael. It's not the daughter of Israel. It's the sons.

Sons of Israel. The men take the hit because they're in charge. What am I driving at here? As we look at this woman and as we go into the description in the latter part of chapter 18 and look at the description here, we want to make an effort to look at ourselves and say, have I got this woman riding around on the government of my soul? To what extent am I yielding to the God of my emotion, God of my belly? To what extent am I pursuing self-gratification instead of loving my neighbor as myself? To what extent am I putting myself at the center and making sure that I am number one instead of God being the object of all my heart and all my soul and all my strength? It's a tough thing to do.

It's really hard to do. It's hard to be objective. It's hard to look at ourselves and scrutinize ourselves and try to eradicate those long-held and long-cherished attitudes.

But this graphic picture shows us how seductive it is. Why do you think they put nubile young ladies in so much of advertising? Because it gets attention. It makes people watch.

It makes people, you know, how come they don't have groups that have just started in Weight Watchers dressing up and being cheerleaders for teams? Why don't they get prisoners and hire them? You know, people that are missing teeth and all scruffy and beat up from being in the drunk tank and all that. Why don't they dress them up and put them out and say, look, we'll pay you five bucks to go out and cheer and you can earn back whatever it is you... I mean, when you have a spokesperson, you got the exercise machines and all that. How come on exercise machines you don't see people who need the exercise on them? You've seen the Bowflex commercial? Do you ever see some great tank of a guy out there saying, I'm going to work off these 75 extra pounds.

You got the little rolling bench things and it's all people that don't need it. What are they on there for? It's why? Because these attractive images, advertisers know you associate them with these and we're drawn in that direction. Well, that's what this woman does.

And it's not just religion. It is entertainment. It is gratification.

It is anything that puts itself in the way of God. I just answered a question earlier today where somebody, I think, tongue in cheek was asking, well, why do Protestants hate the Catholics so much? Well, to a somewhat flippant question, I gave a serious answer and I quoted the scripture where Jesus was talking to his disciples and he said, let no man call you rabbi. Let no man call you master.

Let no man call you father. Because you have one father and you have one master and it's not a human being. And the crippling debility of the Catholic Church is that it has

stood itself squarely between the believer and God.

You try to go to God and here's the Catholic Church standing there in the form of a bishop or a priest saying, no, you talk to me and I'll talk to Mary and Mary will talk to God. Or you talk to me and I'll talk to a saint and the saint will talk to Mary and Mary will talk to Jesus and Jesus will talk to God. And we're going to build a bureaucracy for you to approach God.

And just as Jesus accused the Pharisees, you make it so difficult. You won't go into the kingdom yourself and you make it impossible for anybody else to get there either. And standing something in the way of God is a great crime.

And that's what the Catholic Church does, but it's by no means limited to the Catholic Church. We can consciously set an idol between ourselves and God. We can put something there and say, well, I need financial security.

I need acceptance. I need relationship. I need fulfillment.

I need whatever it is. You know, fill in the blank. I'm just drawing stuff out of the air.

But we all have an instinct and a nature that men love darkness rather than light because their deeds are evil. Well, our nature inherently has a hard time looking into the light for very long. And we have to exercise our volition to avoid saying, well, I think I'm going to look over here a while.

How about I divert my attention over here? That's what these two chapters are about. And if we remember that as we look at chapter 17 and chapter 18 and on into chapter 19, it's not just some future revived Roman Empire, godless pagan religion that falls flat. This is a thing that applies to us.

To document what I am saying, the role of Babylon in Bible symbolism is all through the Bible. You can go back to Jeremiah chapter 25. Thus says the Lord God of Israel to me.

This is Jeremiah 25, 15. Take this wine cup of fury from my hand and cause all nations to whom I send you to drink it. And they will drink and stagger and go mad because of the sword that I will send among them.

Jeremiah chapter 51. I think we looked at this last time. Verse six, flee from the midst of Babylon and everyone save his life.

Do not be cut off in her iniquity for this is the time of the Lord's vengeance. He shall recompense her. Babylon was a golden cup in the Lord's hand that made all the earth drunk.

The nations drank her wine. Therefore the nations are deranged. Babylon has suddenly fallen and been destroyed.

Wail for her, take balm for her pain. Perhaps she may be healed. We would have healed Babylon but she is not healed.

Forsake her and let us go everyone to his own country for her judgment reaches to heaven and is lifted up to the skies. The Lord has revealed our righteousness. You see the contrast between this religion that insists on its own way and its own righteousness.

Jesus condemned the Pharisees for this. Paul talks about it in Romans. I admit and confess that Israel has a zeal for God but it is not according to knowledge.

The Lord has revealed our righteousness. Come and let us declare in Zion the work of the Lord our God. Make the arrows bright, gather the shield.

The Lord has raised up the spirit of the kings of the Medes for his plan is against Babylon to destroy it because it is the vengeance of the Lord, the vengeance for his temple. That is what the judgment on Babylon is all about. It is the difference between the temple of God, the righteousness of God and everything that sets itself up as a substitute.

This is Jeremiah 51.13. See if this sounds familiar. The Lord has devised and done what he spoke against the inhabitants of Babylon. Oh you who dwell by many waters, abundant in treasures, your end has come.

This is Jeremiah 51.13. The measure of your covetousness. The Lord of hosts has sworn by himself. Surely I will fill you with men as with locusts and they shall lift up a shout against you.

Verse 17. Everyone is dull hearted without knowledge. Every metalsmith is put to shame by the carved image for his molded image is falsehood and there is no breath in them.

They are futile, a work of errors. In the time of their punishment they shall perish. The portion of Jacob is not like them.

This of course is God, the portion of Jacob. For he is the maker of all things and Israel is the tribe of his inheritance. The Lord of hosts is his name.

You are my battle axe and weapons of war for with you I will break the nation in pieces. With you I will destroy kingdoms. I will break in pieces the horse and its rider.

I will break in pieces the chariot and its rider. I will break in pieces man and woman. I will break in pieces old and young.

With you I will break in pieces the young man and the maiden. With you I will also break in pieces the shepherd and his flock. The farmer is yoke of oxen, governors and rulers.

I will repay Babylon and all the inhabitants of Calvia for all the evil they have done in Zion and your sight says the Lord. Now, the reason I am belaboring this, and I know it's

hard not to kind of glaze over, but look at how much space God spends in the Bible talking about the destruction of Babylon. This is a really big deal.

It's much bigger than I realized when I started looking at chapter 17 and chapter 18. But it is all through the Bible. It goes back to Babel.

It goes all the way through the time of Daniel, down through the time of the New Testament, and all the way down through the letters to the seven churches and down to the time of the end. Because this is that which sets itself up in opposition to God. And it goes by many names.

It flies many flags. It wears many garments. It adorns itself and disguises itself in many ways.

But anything that is not dedication to living life to please God is the woman. Well, God says these masses of people are going to drink the wine of the fornication that has provoked God's implacable wrath. Why is it fornication? Because it is outside the covenant relationship that is supposed to exist between a human being and God.

If you're in the Old Testament, it's the Israel covenants. If you're in the New Testament, that's why we call it the New Testament, New Covenant. But we have an obligation to God.

And violating that obligation by going astray and seeking to please ourselves is no different than somebody in a marriage going astray and seeking to please themselves. Or a child under the authority of their parents going astray and seeking to please themselves. Or an employee in a company going astray and embezzling or abusing their authority.

Same thing in government. Same thing in the military. Any place where you are given responsibility and you have made a promise and you've made a pledge and you break it, this is the same thing.

It is pornia. It is to commit yourself to something and then breach that trust, breach that pledge. That's the woman and that's what we are to watch out for and to avoid.

And the ultimate judgment of God on those who do this kind of thing and are unrepentant and think it's their life's work to continue in it. God says in verse 25 of Jeremiah 51, Behold, I am against you, O destroying mountain, who destroys all the earth, says the Lord. I will stretch out my hand against you.

I will roll you down from the rocks and make you a burnt mountain. They shall not take from you a stone for a corner nor a stone for a foundation, but you shall be desolate forever, says the Lord. Those who make a lifestyle out of this sort of dedication will have absolutely no foundation.

Nothing at all. Nothing at all to build on. Nothing permanent.

Nothing that lasts. And this is a warning. God is getting our attention in so many different ways, so many different books, so many different passages.

The judgment is coming on this. It's not just an end time judgment. The passage that always comes to my mind in this regard is Romans chapter 2, where Paul talks about those that God is going to render to each one according to his deeds.

Romans chapter 2, verse 6. Eternal life to those who by patient continuance in doing good seek for glory and honor and immortality. None of us are going to have a perfect record in this. We will fail.

We will fail big. We'll pull a David or a Moses every once in a while, or an Abraham or an Isaac or just about anybody you want to name in the Bible. A Peter who denies the Lord three times and yet he has a great career as an apostle, writes some inspired scripture, has a gospel and two epistles in the New Testament.

And yet Peter did what many consider to be the worst thing you can possibly do. Denied the Lord not once, not twice, but three times. It is patient continuance.

This is establishing a climate regardless of the spots of weather we may have. This is the trend. This is the pattern.

This is the consistent nature of our life. Those who by patient continuance in well doing seek for glory and honor and immortality. What is your motivation? I want to reflect the glory of God.

I want to reflect the honor of God. I want to share in the immortality of God, the eternal life of God. What is the contrast? Romans 2, verse 8, but to those who are self-seeking.

That is the primary description. Those who are self-seeking and do not obey the truth. We are either seeking God's glory, God's honor and God's immortality and God is responding with eternal life or we are self-seeking.

We are not obeying the truth and obeying unrighteousness and for those is stored up indignation, wrath, tribulation and anguish. We may or may not see it in this life, but we are certainly going to see it come. Every soul, a man who does evil, the Jew verse and also the Greek, but glory, honor and peace to everyone who works what is good, to the Jew first and also to the Greek, for there is no partiality with God.

God doesn't care where you came from. God doesn't care how you got started. God isn't interested in the past.

Paul says, forgetting those things which are behind, I press toward the mark. High calling of God in Christ Jesus. Just take that rear view mirror, snap it off the windshield, press

toward the mark.

Glory, honor and peace to everyone who works what is good. There is no partiality with God. Well, this is what is going on in these chapters.

In Revelation chapter 18 where it says to, there is a voice in verse 4 that says, my people come out of her so you may not participate in her sins and that you may not receive her plagues. If you don't participate in her sins, you won't receive her plagues. Isaiah chapter 48 and verse 20, go forth from Babylon, flee from the Chaldeans with a voice of singing declare, proclaim this, utter it to the end of the earth, say the Lord has redeemed his servant Jacob.

I don't have to live in Babylon. Isaiah chapter 52 verse 11, depart, depart, go out from there, touch no unclean thing. Go out from the midst of her, be clean you who bear the vessels of the Lord.

Why did Belshazzar get the axe the same night he saw the handwriting on the wall? What was he doing? He had the vessels of the Lord and he was unworthy to be goofing with them. He was unworthy to have them out there and be drinking from them. Be clean you who do bear the vessels of the Lord.

We are priests. We have the opportunity to serve God on holy ground and God considers that a serious task and will judge us seriously if we fail it. Jeremiah 51 verse 45, my people go out of the midst of her.

Let everyone deliver himself from the fierce anger of the Lord. There is no reason to fall under this judgment. We deliver ourselves.

Paul in 2 Corinthians chapter 6 verse 17 quotes some of these verses. Come out from among them and be separate says the Lord. Do not touch what is unclean and I will receive you.

It's a pretty clear choice. We cannot isolate ourselves from the world and we cannot isolate ourselves from our own sinful nature. We are going to fail.

We are going to mess up. God has provided the grace to be purged, to be cleansed, to be forgiven and to get a clean start. All we have to do is set aside our pride, claim that grace and then walk in the light.

The sins in verse 5 associated with this woman have piled up to heaven and God has remembered her crimes. If it was just the 70th week, why would God be remembering her crimes? She is guilty of the blood of prophets and apostles because this is this mindset that has permeated history ever since man fell really. Jeremiah chapter 16 verse 18, God says I will repay double for their iniquity and their sin because they have defiled my land, they have filled my inheritance with the carcasses of their detestable and

abominable idols.

It's a double sin because the land that is supposed to be holy and dedicated to God is not only not holy and not dedicated to God but it is polluted and defiled with these detestable idols. Remember Ezekiel went in there and found the creepy crawlies and weeping for Temeus and all the rest of it in the holy precincts and it was a double crime. Same thing in Isaiah chapter 40 in verse 2, speak comfort to Jerusalem and cry out to her that her warfare is ended, her iniquity is pardoned for she has received from the Lord's hand double for all her sins.

Same thing, double crime, double penalty. The verbs here that say God is going to repay and give back are plural. These entreaties are from God's people plural.

This ought to be our corporate attitude. This ought to be the way we think even though we know that it's not our place to revenge ourselves, to seek retribution and judgment, we can commit it into God's hands. Deuteronomy 32, 35, vengeance is mine and recompense.

Their foot shall slip in due time for the day of their calamity is at hand and the things to come hasten upon them. Hebrews chapter 10 in verse 30, we know him who said vengeance is mine I will repay and again the Lord will judge his people. We saw in the last chapters, Revelation 17, 16 and 17, the horns on the beast are going to turn against the harlot and make her desolate and naked, eat her flesh and burn her with fire for God has put it into their hearts to fulfill his purpose.

God chooses the time when this unholy alliance and partnership between the woman and the beast implodes and they become enemies. You see a little miniature of that over in the Palestinian community this past week with the Hamas party winning the election and nobody really thought it was going to happen and now they can't figure out what to do because the Palestinian security forces and a lot of their commerce and so on is intertwined with Fatah and Fatah is out and Hamas is in and they can't just kick everybody out because they will have no security force and everything is going to collapse and so now they have to try to figure out a way to work together because they are at odds, they are against each other, they are in opposition and they unexpectedly won and now they have all kinds of problems and it is endangering the peace process and they are going to lose support. When you are the underdog and you don't have any power and people say, oh yeah, rah, rah, Hamas, but now that they are in power, now they have responsibility, now they have to produce results, now they have to make things go and so you can see where very quickly something that starts out being sort of symbiotic and everybody is in the right place, suddenly everyone is at odds pointing fingers and saying wait a minute, what about you? That is what is going to happen in the last days and this is what has ever happened in the unholy alliance between the greedy and the powerful, the alliance between religion and political power, religion and

economic power, inevitably people start saying wait a minute, you got my piece of the pie and so on.

That is what is going to happen as it is spelled out in chapter 17. Well, it says that Babylon is going to receive double according to her works but in Hebrew and this is really a Greek reference to an old Hebrew phrase as we have seen. This really means to produce a duplicate, to do again something that has already been done.

So, what she has done due back to her is the idea. Jesus said with the judgment with which you judge others, you will be judged and so it does not really mean double the discipline so much as duplicate the heartache and the pain and the destruction and the injustice that she has perpetrated back on herself. This is why you end up with a sort of a double.

Give her the equivalent according to her works or pay her back in kind is the idea. Mix for her double in the cup in which she has mixed it is one cup. It does not say mix two cups of the cup that she mixed.

This has already been stated back in chapter 14 verse 10. He himself shall also drink of the wine of the wrath of God which is poured out full strength into the cup of his indignation. He shall be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels and the presence of the Lamb.

Chapter 16 verse 19, the great city was divided into three parts and the nations fell and great Babylon was remembered before God to give her the cup of the wine of the fierceness of his wrath. It goes on to say in verse 7, as much as she glorified and luxuriated herself so give her torment and grief. Once again you see this theme of self gratification and this is our nemesis, this is our bugaboo, this is the demon on our shoulder is self gratification.

We are built for it. We start life wanting it. It is our first instinct is to have our needs met and have our desires satisfied.

It is inherent. It takes cultivation of the new nature to overcome the proclivities of the old nature and that is certainly a process. If we don't to the extent that we glorify and luxuriate ourselves, we are going to be tormented and given grief.

That is how it works. In her heart she says, I sit as a queen, I am not a widow, I will never see grief. Again in Jeremiah 51 Babylon was called the pride of the whole earth and believing that our own gratification is the most important priority, that is pride.

A lot of times people feel bad about themselves and people have sort of an inferiority complex or they are very shy or whatever and why is that? Too worried about what people think and that is actually pride. I mean it is one of those sort of reverse psychology things but shy and wallflower type of people typically are proud. Afraid of

stepping out and being ill thought of.

Afraid of saying the wrong thing. Afraid somebody is going to make fun or find it amusing and I can't afford that. I can't suffer that abuse.

Not in every single case but it is often true that when you relax and decide, I really honestly am not concerned about what people think, suddenly your personality and your wit and your ability to engage in fruitful and enjoyable conversation with others flows like a river from beneath the throne of God because you are not worried about your ego and whether or not it will be bruised which is pride. How Babylon has become desolate among the nations. Isaiah 13, 19 Babylon the glory of kingdoms, the beauty of the Chaldeans, pride.

Pride and self gratification are all wrapped up together. It will be as when God overthrew Sodom and Gomorrah. In Babylon there was a big temple called the temple of Bel Nebo and it had a statue of the idol seated on a golden throne next to a golden altar and on this altar once a year a thousand pounds of incense were burned.

Half a ton of incense got burned on this altar. But this city, all of that burning of incense to the idol didn't of course do it any good. The idea here, in fact the noun, the word torment means the agony you experience after being stung by a scorpion.

I could tell you a little story about a scorpion. I don't know if you saw the little news item where a guy found a dinosaur skeleton and packed it in plaster and took it back to the museum and then spent months and months carefully chipping away the plaster to get the skeleton out. Well, the plaster had been on there 15 months and he cracked open a certain part of it and here ran a little scorpion out of the rocks that had been in there for a year and three months.

Because scorpions, that's what they do, they subsist for a long time without food or water. Fifteen months a scorpion was trapped under that plaster and as soon as he was freed he just scurried right out and the guy felt sorry for him, put him in a little container, took him out and turned him loose. Probably got eaten five minutes later by something.

But the word here, torment, give her torment and grief, give her a scorpion sting. It's not worth it. Why pursue self-gratification only to receive the sting of the scorpion? Well, we have to pause here and take our break.

When we come back we'll pick up in Revelation chapter 18 on the judgment of Babylon.