

Revelation 20-06-11b

I'd like to thank Dan and Anna and Lori for providing our wonderful special music. I know whom I have believed and I'm persuaded that He is able to keep that, that I have committed unto Him against that day. It's a wonderful truth, perfectly in keeping with our study.

We're looking at the Old Testament background of the picture of the scarlet harlot mystery, Babylon the Great in Revelation chapter 17 and 18. And we find this in Isaiah chapter 47. We saw the introduction to it in chapter 46.

If you turn now to Isaiah chapter 48, this is critical for us to remember. These things were written for our instruction upon whom the ends of the ages have come. Chapter 48 of Isaiah, hear this, O house of Jacob, who are called by the name of Israel and have come forth from the wellsprings of Judah, who swear by the name of the Lord and make mention of the God of Israel, but not in truth or in righteousness.

Sound familiar? They call themselves after the holy city. They lean on the God of Israel, the Lord of hosts is His name. I have declared the former things from the beginning.

They went forth from my mouth, and I caused them to hear it. Suddenly I performed them, and they came to pass, because I knew that you were obstinate, and your neck was an iron sinew, and your brow is bronze. Even from the beginning I have declared it to you.

Before it came to pass, I proclaimed it to you, lest you should say, My idol has done them, and My carved image and My molded image have commanded them. You have heard, see all of this, and will you not declare it? I have made you hear new things from this time, even hidden things, and you did not know them, i.e., you didn't know them previously. They are created now, and not from the beginning, and before this day you have not heard them, lest you should say, Of course I knew them.

Surely you did not hear, surely you did not know, surely from long ago your ear was not opened, for I knew that you would deal very treacherously, and were called a transgressor from the womb. For My name's sake I will defer My anger, and for My praise I will restrain it from you, so that I do not cut you off. Behold, I have refined you, but not as silver.

I have tested you in the furnace of affliction. For My own sake, for My own sake I will do it. For why should My name be profaned? How should My name be profaned? I will not give My glory to another." You can continue in chapter 48 there, but remember that God allows everything for His own purposes.

He is going to refine His own people. He is refining us. He is separating us.

We've seen in recent weeks the Lord Jesus talking about how He is going to divide households

like a sword, and there will be the faithful, and there will be those who are essentially drinking the Kool-Aid, swallowing the lie that is ultimately going to deceive the world. 2 Thessalonians chapter 2. I don't have time to turn to it, but you know that which restrains and will continue to do so until it is taken out of the way, and then those who remain are going to be under a strong delusion from God so that they believe the lie. And you can already look around today and see how easily that's going to be accomplished.

God is simply allowing certain areas of evil to progress and to chart their own course and make their own headway, and it is going to result in delusion. It is going to result in people irrationally, just unbelievably swallowing the lie. It is happening around us.

It is happening now. As our final Old Testament portion of the study this morning, I mentioned that this morning, it's this evening. I studied it this morning, so it was stored in my brain with an earlier file stamp.

But I want to turn back now to document that these roots in Isaiah are consciously alluded to in Revelation. Babylon is fallen, is fallen. Where does that come from? Turn back a few pages in Isaiah to chapter 21.

We're going to continue to see a remarkable biblical description of our present day in the United States of America. This is not the only time that this has been true. I think it's been true periodically down through history, never more so than now.

Turn to Isaiah chapter 21. This is the burden against the wilderness of the sea, the wilderness of the sea. You know what the troubled sea which cannot rest, whose waters cast up mire and dirt, that's Isaiah as well.

You know what that represents. The harlot sits on many waters, dominating the nations of the world, the chaotic forces that are without hope and without God in the world. The burden against the wilderness of the sea.

Notice, as whirlwinds in the south pass through, so it comes from the desert, from a terrible land. A distressing vision is declared to me. Have you turned your television on lately? The treacherous dealer deals treacherously, and the plunderer plunders.

In the NIV, I think this says the looter loots, literally. The treacherous dealer deals treacherously, and the plunderer plunders. Go up, O Elam.

Besiege, O media. All its sighing I have made deceased. Therefore, my loins are filled with pain.

Pangs have taken hold of me like the pangs of a woman in labor. I am distressed when I hear it. I was dismayed when I saw it.

My heart wavers. Fearfulness frightened me. The night for which I longed, he turned into fear for

me.

Prepare the table. Set a watchman in the tower. Eat and drink.

Arise, you princes. Anoint the shield. For thus has the Lord said to me, Go, set a watchman.

Let him declare what he sees. So the watchman saw a chariot with a pair of horsemen, a chariot of donkeys, and a chariot of camels. And he listened earnestly with great care.

Then he cried, A lion, my lord! I stand continually on the watchtower in the daytime. I have sat at my post every night. And look, here comes a chariot of men with a pair of horsemen.

Then he answered and said, What? In verse 9, Babylon is fallen, is fallen. And all the carved images of her gods he has broken to the ground. Oh, my threshing and the grain of my floor, that which I have heard from the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel, I have declared it to you.

This is my hope. This is my prayer that I am able as one who looks into the word of God to declare as the watchman what the word of God has to say about our current day and our current time and the near-term future. We are in a Babylon that claims the name of Christianity but is largely false, is largely a mother of harlots, offspring of different denominations with various perversions, distortions, and departures from the word of God.

And the world is full of false religions. The most recent religion is to move away from biblical truth altogether and faith in the scriptural record of God's creation of the world, of His miraculous preservation of His people, of the coming of the Savior Himself and the signs which identified Him and indicated Him to be that Messiah, that Savior, that Son of God and Son of Man. And to discount, dismiss, to substitute the wisdom of the world for that, you see it all around us, even in the so-called Christian Church.

For much of history, Roman Catholicism, the Latin Church has fulfilled this role. And in those three areas we've seen in Revelation chapter 18, the spiritual, the political, and the economic. And this is why there is going to be such moaning and mourning when Babylon is destroyed and the smoke of her destruction rises and the merchants stand afar off in ships and mourn the loss of their commerce and their profit from these perversions and fornication-like liaisons with the powerful in the world.

So these are things of which we need to be aware in our time. If the Lord is near at hand, then this personification lines up in amazing ways with the United States, formerly a bastion and a beacon of Christianity, now a purveyor of corruption and labeled as such by other false religions. And so when you come back to Revelation now in chapter 18, in verse 9, "...the kings of the earth who committed fornication and lived luxuriously with her will weep and lament from her when they see the smoke of her burning, standing at a distance for fear of her torment, saying, Alas, alas, that great city Babylon, that mighty city, for in one hour your judgment has come.

The merchants will weep and mourn over her for no one buys their merchandise anymore." They have been selling into this population. Gold, silver, precious stones, you remember the gold and silver mentioned in Isaiah, the luxurious living that we saw in Isaiah chapter 47, adorning and bedecking herself with every comfort and every kind of jewelry and so on. These objects of ivory, precious wood, bronze, iron and marble, just peruse what's available on Amazon today.

Cinnamon, incense, fragrant oil and frankincense, wine and oil, fine flour and wheat, cattle and sheep, horses and chariots, bodies and souls of men. And we now have reached the point where people can be made and destroyed in an hour via the Internet, real or false. If you haven't seen it already, look up the face of hunger that has been created.

There's videos on the web where they synthesized hundreds of faces of people who are in reality or allegedly suffering from hunger in the United States. And they created a composite that is no real person, but it speaks, it talks, it's got pores, it's got every fine hair. It is indistinguishable from a real person speaking and using facial expressions.

And it's not a cartoon. It's not a poor, clumsy CGI. This is created from actual photographic material assembled by artificial intelligence.

And it looks for all the world like a real person. And it's not. This is the technology that can be leveraged and implemented to fulfill many of the prophecies of the image of the beast and so on in the book that is under our gaze.

Verse 14, the fruit that your soul longed for has gone from you. If you understand the symmetries in scripture, this woman longed for a fruit and her soul desired it, but it has gone from her. How did history begin with a woman longing for fruit? Because it was desirable to make one wise and goodly to look upon.

And Eve partook of the fruit, but everything that she hoped to achieve by taking it turned to ashes in her mouth. This woman at the opposite end of history has the same experience. All the things which are rich and splendid have been lost to you and you shall find them no more at all.

You look around this nation today in particular and the world in general, and many of the benefits and the foundational advantages that existed in the modern world, especially the Western world, because of the influence of Christianity have evaporated, are gone, and are not coming back. Freedoms guaranteed under our constitution are evaporating. Truth is basically what is right in a man's own eyes, just like in the days of the judges.

Everyone does what is right in his own eyes, and it's unprecedented in the modern day. As I say, there have been incarnations and iterations. It's very interesting.

I did an exercise today. I went to my oldest commentary. I've got a 1634 edition of Adam Clark published in 1634 on the old paper.

It's a thing of beauty. And reading Adam Clark's commentary on these chapters, Revelation chapter 17 and 18, he has a detailed excursus on identifying the 10 horns, the seven mountains, and tying it to the Roman Catholic Church in general, the Latin Church in particular, with its various incarnations. He ties the 10 heads to various political heads that have been put in place in or through Catholicism since its inception.

And the view that he had some 400 years ago is similar to ours. So the reality here has never been more true than in our day. The fruit that your soul longed for has gone from you.

All the things which are rich and splendid have been lost to you, and you shall find them no more at all. 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, that great city that was clothed in fine linen, that's white, purple, that's blue, scarlet, that's red, and adorned with gold and precious stones and pearls, in one hour such great riches came to nothing. If anyone had doubts about how quickly the structures and normality of this nation can be disassembled, just look at the history of the past couple of months.

You can, in fact, keep everyone home from church. You can, in fact, riot and loot and destroy and burn with no consequence in major cities of the United States. It's just a fact.

It's not isolated, and the people who have perpetrated it are now not content with their achievement. They are on the march and on the move to expand it, to not let their momentum die. They want to accelerate.

They want to proceed. They want to continue. Those of you old enough to remember the rioting in the late 1960s, I witnessed some of the Watts riots on our fuzzy black-and-white television back in that day, and various outbreaks of violence during anti-war protests and so on.

They were isolated. They were limited. They came to an end.

People looked at it and said, well, that was unusual, but life largely went on. Not saying that's a good thing or a bad thing. There are certainly many moral wrongs that need to be righted.

The best way to right them is to increase the influence of godliness and godly people in our society, because the only power for positive change is through God, through His Spirit, through His Word, through the Lord Jesus Christ. Those are the only antidote to sin, to evil, to corruption, to our fallen nature. There is no other.

All of the Chaldeans, the necromancers, the astrologers, the monthly prognosticators that Isaiah talked about, none of them were able to stave off the destruction of Babylon. None of the talking heads and alleged experts and leaders of movements in this day can save this nation. And it is probably going to not be time to stick and to stay.

It is going to be time to wait for God's call. Come out of her, my people, so that you don't share in her sins. Remembering that we are the spiritual people of God and this is a spiritual call.

It is important that we spiritually distance ourselves from the evils that are increasingly defining our world in general, our nation in particular. To touch not the unclean thing, to hate the garment that is spotted by the flesh, to continue to shine as lights, to speak the truth in love, but to be alert and be aware. There is a time to be the faithful remnant, to be that residue that God honors and says, I will not destroy Sodom for the sake of the ten.

But in my opinion, we are getting dangerously close to the minimum level of remainder of those for the sake of which God will not destroy and not judge. I think God may be walking with Abraham right now saying, yes, if you could find ten, I wouldn't destroy it. But Abraham couldn't.

Lot and his family were called to come out to avoid the destruction. So we seem to be approaching that point very rapidly. Jesus said, when the son of man returns, will he find faith on the earth? Well, that is the pertinent question.

And it's a question we need to ask ourselves. We are not in a position to change society. We're not in the position to start a movement or spark a revival.

Or if people could just hear certain words coming from our mouths or see certain things in our example, they would turn and convert and be saved. That's not going to happen, in my humble opinion. We have to look to ourselves.

There was a time when Jesus said to his disciples, go out and don't take a sword with you. There was a later time after the rejection of the Messiah was manifest and evident in Israel when he said, you need a sword now. And the night before he was arrested and the day before he was crucified, the disciples said, we've got a couple of swords.

And Jesus basically said, good, be careful how you use them. Peter found that out the hard way with Malchus. But it is time to pay attention, be calm, rest assured in God's assurances.

We saw that in Isaiah. We see it here in Revelation. We have nothing to fear, but we have an opportunity to apply.

We have an opportunity to be the faithful remnant that God will send the marking angel of Ezekiel's day to mark our foreheads like the 144,000 servants to have a seal in their foreheads before the judgment of God falls. I personally don't want there to be any doubt in God's mind or any of the angels' minds that I am one of the people that needs that mark, that covets God's preservation, protection, deliverance, and the opportunity to be useful, to be of service, to persevere and be faithful as we saw when we reviewed the letters to the seven churches last time. We have every opportunity and to remind ourselves to have clear eyes.

Don't think that we are in good shape when we are in fact poor and miserable and blind and naked. It's a good time for self-assessment. It is a good time to get back to the Bible and back to the things that we know, to pray intelligently, to analyze what is going on around us with peace in our hearts and wisdom in our souls from the Word of God ever more so as you see the day approaching.

So fascinating things that are never more pertinent than now in looking at the world in which we live, the lives that we have been called to live, representing the Lord Jesus Christ as His body on this earth. We'll continue our study next Thursday night with some fresh insights looking at the structure of the book and the things that we can personally take away looking forward to the time of Jacob's Trouble even as we look back in the Old Testament at some of the earlier times of Jacob's Trouble. There's wonderful insight and application for us in our day and in our time, our stewardship of what God has provided to us as believers in the Lord Jesus Christ.

So we'll continue the study next week but we'll close here for tonight in a word of prayer. Father we do thank You for the wonderful salvation that we enjoy, the security of being held firmly in Your hands. The Lord Jesus said that we cannot be plucked out of Your hands or out of His and we rest in that assurance.

We claim Your promises. We seek to be those who are judged worthy and found faithful and we pray that our studies in recent days will contribute to that goal that God the Holy Spirit can use the truth of Your Word to clarify our vision, to light our path, to help us see clearly the challenges and opportunities to which we can rise by Your grace and by Your power. We pray these things in Jesus' name.

Amen.