

Rev 26-05-03a

Good morning, welcome to the Sunday morning services at Grace & Truth Bible Church. This is the 3rd of May, 2026. We are continuing our study of the book of Revelation in general.

We are in chapter 17 and 18, looking at the mystery revealed, which is Babylon and what it means to us by way of understanding and application, which is the reason the Lord Jesus gave it to us. Let's ask God's blessing on our time of fellowship and study and we will dive in. Father, we are so grateful for another opportunity to spend this time together, to endeavor, to learn and grow, to receive the ministry of your Holy Spirit and the power of your word implanted in our hearts.

We pray that as we look at your word together, that the concepts and the truths will be like a hammer that breaks the rock in pieces and a fire that eliminates what is unnecessary and distracting in our thought life so that we can align our goals and values and priorities in a way that redeems the time, reflects your glory and the glory of our Savior, the Lord Jesus. We pray these things in his name, amen. I hope that with me, you are fascinated by the light that the description of Babylon shines on our present world and on our present day.

The longer we look at the description, the priorities that these people who live and dwell and interact with this satanic capital city of Babylon, express, these things are manifold and manifest in the world around us today. You cannot turn on the news without being exposed to Babylon in all of its pseudo glory. Much of what happens in terms of actions, crimes, perpetration of evil in every area of life, is described in the word of God related to this spiritual capital, or I might say unspiritual capital.

We're gonna continue our look at Babylon this morning under the formal listing of what Babylon traffics in that we find in Revelation chapter 18. Let's read it together, beginning in verse four. "John hears a voice from heaven saying, "Come out of her, my people, lest you share in her sins "and lest you receive of her plagues." We understand the rapture has removed the body of Christ, church age believers from the earth.

There are now Old Testament saints, as it were, who have come to faith. Many of them will become martyrs. Others will be part of the representation of Israel that flees into the wilderness, escapes the flood that the dragon sends after her.

And when he finds that the earth has swallowed up his attempt to destroy Israel outright, the dragon then turns his attention to the remainder of her children in the world. So we have basically two different kinds of believers. We have those who are a part of the woman who is sheltered so that there is a presence of Israel that is preserved in a national sense.

And then there are those who are individuals many of whom will be martyred. And that will be their testimony. They will be like those in Smyrna, be faithful unto death.

You will receive the crown of life. And their testimony is going to be sprinkled through the world so that those who remain have no excuse. The angel that proclaims the eternal gospel that we saw in a previous chapter, part of this remainder of testimony is represented by these who are still in the world, who are available.

Those who stand at the great white throne judgment will be utterly and totally without excuse. It is not as though they haven't heard. And so, come out of her, my people, lest you share in her sins and receive of her plagues.

This is not only a call to those believers who are alive and endeavoring to be faithful during the 70th week, and especially during the great tribulation. It is a call to all of us. Spiritual Babylon has existed in the past.

It is certainly present and it is going to be future. Think of it as Satan's capital city compared and contrasted with Jerusalem. There's an earthly Jerusalem, but there is a heavenly Jerusalem.

It already exists. It is going to come down out of heaven at the beginning of the kingdom of the father, but it's already there. It's already built.

That is where the heavenly temple is. And this is where the presence of God and the voice of God are expressed. So this call to come out of Babylon, this is talking to us.

This is you and this is me. We are immersed in a culture that celebrates evil, that perpetrates evil, that justifies evil, and calls what is evil, good, and calls what is good, evil. You see this all around us.

So how do we deal with this? How can we counter the attack? How can we be wary and alive and cautious about its allure and its temptations, its desire to have us? We're going to see that this morning. Why is it necessary for us to come out of her as God's people? We do not want to share in her sins, and we do not want to come under the kind of discipline that is represented by her plagues. Her sins have reached to heaven, verse five, and God has remembered her iniquities.

There has been a record kept of what has been done in the name of spiritual Babylon since the earliest days. Going back to the early chapters of Genesis, verse six, rendered to her just as she rendered and repay her double according to her works. In the cup which she has mixed, mix double for her.

In the measures 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. We say, I can understand this on the part of unbelievers.

They eschew God or anything that reminds them of God. They reject any notion that there is divine authority, that the creator has a right and proper ability to ask for faith and obedience and

so on. How is this a call to you and me? Turn with me back to the book of Isaiah, chapter 47.

Isaiah 47, in my New King James, this chapter is headlined, The Humiliation of Babylon, interestingly enough. We've already seen the chapters in Jeremiah that are so pertinent, Jeremiah 50 and 51. Here we have Isaiah 47.

Now, this is talking about Babylon, but it's not. Listen closely as it proceeds. Come down and sit in the dust, O virgin daughter of Babylon.

How is Babylon pictured in Revelation? Mother of harlots, right? So if you are the daughter of Babylon and Babylon is the mother of harlots, what does that make you? But virgin daughter of Babylon is sarcasm, as we will see. Come down and sit in the dust, not on a throne, not in luxury, not on a sumptuous couch with someone fanning you and handing you peeled grapes. Sit in the dust.

This is the standard posture in the ancient world for mourning, ashes and dust, dust and ashes. Come down and sit in the dust, O virgin daughter of Babylon. Sit on the ground without a throne, O daughter of the Chaldeans.

Remember to be a son of something is to partake of its characteristics. We are sons of Abraham. We should be sons of God.

We should be children of our father in heaven. A son of Belial is the exact opposite. O daughter of the Chaldeans.

The Chaldeans rely on wisdom rather than spiritual truth. For you shall no more be called tender and delicate. Take the millstones and grind meal.

Remove your veil, take off your skirt, uncover the thigh, pass through the rivers. These are euphemisms for things that go on in the perpetration of prostitution, harlotry, adultery, fornication. We don't need to elaborate that.

It's pretty clear as it stands. Your nakedness shall be uncovered. Yes, your shame will be seen.

I will take vengeance and I will not arbitrate with a man. This of course is referring to God's people, Israel. And it is a very caustic and cutting description.

In other chapters, we have seen it in the past, Judah and Samaria were supposed to be virgin daughters belonging to God, but this is what Judah and Jerusalem have become. As for our Redeemer, the Lord of hosts is his name, the Holy One of Israel. There's just a reminder here.

Do you remember at all that the Holy One of Israel is your Redeemer? If we want to flee youthful lusts, if we want to cancel sin in our lives, if we want to escape the influence of evil, the starting point is to remember our creator and our Redeemer. Start with the presence of God. Remember,

Paul says at the close of one of his letters, let your moderation, your self-control, your limiting of your desires and your cravings, let your moderation be known to all.

The Lord is at hand. It doesn't say the return of the Lord is at hand, the Lord himself is at hand. Remember your creator, remember your Redeemer.

He is present. Do you really want to commit verbal sins or attitude sins or overt sins with the Lord Jesus in the room? This is enough to take the fire out of our sinful nature and our fallen inclinations. Start by remembering that God is near.

We are in his presence, 24-7-365. So that is given here in verse four. I will take vengeance, I will not arbitrate with a man.

In verse three, our Redeemer. Notice as for is in italics, you can scratch it out. Our Redeemer, the Lord of hosts, is his name, the Holy one of Israel.

So verse five, sit in silence and go into darkness, O daughter of the Chaldeans, for you shall no longer be called the lady of kingdoms. How is the Babylon mother of harlots pictured? Sitting astride a beast with heads and horns that represent kings and kingdoms. The point here is to remember, we tend to say, well, that Babylon, that's the mother of harlots, the beast, the heads, the horns, that's all unbelievers.

They're coming under the rightful judgment of God. Look at what God is saying to believers, to his people in this very same terms. If we ignore or become apathetic about the presence of the Holy Spirit and the power of the word of God in our lives, we are no better than unbelievers.

We are susceptible to the same behaviors, the same attitudes, the same sins, the same perpetrations of evil as the worst of unbelievers. It is so important to hug to our breast the provision that God has made to lift us up out of the miry clay, out of the dust, out of alignment with those who are destined for severe divine judgment. He's talking to his people here in Isaiah 47.

Sit in silence and go into darkness, O daughter of the Chaldeans. You shall no longer be called the lady of kingdoms. I was angry with my people.

I have profaned my inheritance and given them into your hand. You showed them no mercy. On the elderly you laid your yoke very heavily and you said, I shall be a lady forever so that you did not take these things to heart nor remember the latter end of them.

Therefore hear this now, you who are given to pleasures, who dwell securely, who say in your heart, I am and there was no one else besides me. I shall not sit as a widow nor shall I know the loss of children. But these two things shall come to you in a moment, in one day, the loss of children and widowhood.

They shall come upon you in their fullness because of the multitude of your sorceries for the great abundance of your enchantments. For you have trusted in your wickedness. You have said, no one sees me.

Your wisdom and your knowledge have warped you. Think science. Your wisdom and your knowledge have warped you.

And you have said in your heart, I am and there's no one else besides me. I am the highest form of sentient life. There is nothing smarter than me.

There are no spiritual entities. There is no God. Therefore, evil shall come upon you.

You shall not know from where it arises and trouble shall fall upon you. You will not be able to put it off and desolation shall come upon you suddenly, which you shall not understand. You shall not know.

As with so many of the woe songs that are delivered to the nations, you think of Tyre, Sidon, Moab, Ammon. We have visited these in earlier chapters of Isaiah and Ezekiel. God didn't raise a prophet up in Chaldea or in Babylon to preach to the Babylonians.

It's my belief that they probably never heard any of these verses. To whom is this prophecy given? To whom is this declaration of guilt and judgment given? It's given to Israel. It's talking about Babylon, the Babylon that existed in that day that took Daniel and his three friends and Ezekiel and so many others captive from which captivity others would return and endeavor to rebuild the temple and the wall and the city and so on.

But God speaks to Babylon, but he is talking to his people. I hope that's clear. But it says, I shall not sit as a widow.

And earlier on, he said, you shall no longer be called the lady of kingdoms. And you've seen in our passage in Revelation, Babylon say, I am a queen and no widow. In verse seven of chapter 18, 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. I would encourage you to write Isaiah chapter 47 in the margin next to that claim. And specifically the passage we just read, you will be a widow, even though you say you're not.

Back to our passage in Revelation chapter 18, verse nine. We can back up to verse eight, having just read Isaiah. Her plagues will come in one day, death and mourning and famine, and she will be utterly burned with fire for strong is the Lord God who has judged her.

And if you haven't made the change, that is a perfect tense, past perfect. He has judged her. Verse nine, the kings of the earth who committed fornication and lived luxuriously with her will

weep and lament for her when they see the smoke of her burning.

One thing to note, verse nine and similar passages tell us that when kings are committing fornication with Babylon, the woman, she's not a fellow king. This is not a national entity. Otherwise this would be a king fornicating with a queen.

She is a different kind of entity, a different kind of presence. The kings of the earth are seduced and drawn into evil behavior by spiritual Babylon. This is a spiritual presence, a spiritual power, a spiritual kind of operation.

So it co-ops civil government. It co-ops societies and cultures at a spiritual level. Kings of the earth will weep and lament for 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.

And the merchants of the earth will weep and mourn over her for no one buys their merchandise anymore. Now, this is what we are gonna take a look at. Seldom if ever do you see this list of items parsed or analyzed closely.

It's just a list to a lot of people. Well, that's materialism and self-indulgence in general. Every word that proceeds from the mouth of God is profitable.

There is not an item in this list that isn't there for a reason. And we're going to see why this morning. Merchandise of gold and silver, precious stones and pearls, fine linen and purple, silk and scarlet, every kind of citron wood, every kind of object of ivory, every kind of object of most precious wood, bronze, iron, and marble, and cinnamon and incense, fragrant oil and frankincense, wine and oil, fine flour and wheat, cattle and sheep, horses and chariots, and the bodies and souls of men.

As you scroll further down, you see further references to what characterizes Babylon. Particularly verse 19, all who had ships on the sea became rich by her wealth. In one hour she is made desolate.

And down in verse 22, the sound of harpists, musicians, flautists, and trumpeters shall not be heard in you anymore. No craftsman of any craft shall be found in you anymore. And the sound of a millstone shall not be heard in you anymore.

The light of a lamp shall not shine in you anymore. Then the voice of a bridegroom and bride shall not be heard in you anymore. For your merchants were the great men of the earth, but by your sorcery, all nations were deceived.

And in her was found the blood of prophets and saints and of all who were slain on the earth." And that goes back to what we saw earlier in terms of the martyrs with their souls under the altar, crying out for justice. If you take a moment to analyze this list of wares, if you will, the

merchandise that begins in verse 12, and it's emphasized, the merchants of the earth in verse 11, weep and mourn over her. No one buys their merchandise anymore.

And this merchandise is associated with Babylon directly. So we can begin by noting that these fall into categories. Let's begin with, and you can put a slash if you wanna divide these categories because the items fall into these groups in the listing.

So the first group is precious metals and stones. That's what you have. Merchandise of gold, silver, precious stones, and pearls.

Then you would draw a slash. That's the first group. Secondly, you have fine clothing and textiles.

This is your fine linen, purple, silk, and scarlet. That's the second group. The third group is citron wood, ivory, and gold.

Precious wood, bronze, iron, and marble. These are luxury materials that are more expensive and more prized and found in the finest homes and businesses because they are luxury materials and they are durable. You have lots of examples.

Everybody has examples in their life. You can buy something cheap, it doesn't last. You buy something expensive, it's because it's durable.

It is high quality, it's expensive because it lasts. We just heard our president recently talking about building things out of granite rather than marble because granite lasts longer. Marble is more delicate and more difficult to preserve over time.

Then you have the next group in verse 13. Cinnamon, incense, fragrant oil, and frankincense. These are designed to please the senses.

They're aromatic, they are fragrant, and this creates a pleasing environment. Then you have wine, oil, fine flour, and wheat. These are consumables, different category.

Then you have cattle, sheep, horses, and chariots. The cattle is actually a word that can be used for all forms of domestic products. Domesticated beasts, but primarily cattle, sheep, horses, and chariots.

We'll see what these represent as we analyze each category. And then ultimately you have the bodies and souls of men. This is the top of the chain using and controlling fellow human beings.

So if you want to label each of these seven categories, I would suggest the following. The first category, gold and so on, this is long-term security. People invest in gold, you can see the commercials for various entities that will sell gold or give you gold assets of some kind or another, gold-backed securities, because of their security.

This is long-term wealth. Secondly, you have personal image, personal adornment. How do you present yourself? Do you wear a \$200 suit or do you wear a \$900 suit? How expensive are your shoes? How fancy is your purse? What is your adornment? This will speak of affluence and social acceptability and how you move in the upper crust circles.

So the first category might be wealth or long-term value, that which is an investment, that which is gonna give you long-term security. Secondly is your personal image, the impression you make on others. Thirdly, it is material wealth.

So the wood and the ivory and precious wood, bronze, iron, and marble, this is the environment you create around you, not just your personal presence, but what kind of car do you drive? How nice is the house you live in? How are the furnishings and the fittings? And what impression do you make by what you own? People don't typically show off their gold and their pearls and you invite theft and so on, but you're domiciled, you're dwelling the image that you present and you do it on purpose. I'm gonna get these things because when people come over or when I have foot traffic in my business or whatever, I don't just want it to be practical, useful, comfortable, I want to impress. I'm gonna line the walls with expensive paneling and I'm gonna have marble fittings and beautiful appointments everywhere.

And so this is, what is your priority in terms of an impressive environment? Then fourth, you have the experience. I want pleasant experiences. These are the aromas and the fragrances, the perfumes.

I want to please myself in my environment. The materials largely impress others. The fragrances can do the same, but both of these, one is more ethereal.

There is more of a mystical quality or an experiential quality. This is aesthetics with these perfumes. Then the fifth category with the wine and oil, the fine flour and wheat, this is your sustenance.

How fine a table can you set? How expensive is the food that you can afford to buy? And this is self-gratification in terms of what you take in, in the physical realm. I'm taking plenty of thought for what I eat and what I wear, the first category. When Jesus said, take no thought, we'll see more of that shortly.

Then when you find the category of cattle, sheep, horses, and chariots, these are current expressions of wealth and power. The gold and the silver, the precious stones and the pearls, that's sort of your long-term savings, your investments, your plan for future security. The cattle and sheep, this is your current business.

If you have cattle and sheep, and horses and so on, you are both having an active endeavor that is impressive and can provide fulfillment. I am fulfilled by increasing the number of these that I have. I've got bigger herds, I have more flocks.

Horses and chariots, now we're talking the expression of power. I am going to have power and leverage and influence to a greater and greater degree, not just for my own satisfaction and my own comfort, security, and happiness, but I'm going to begin to express power over others. That starts with chariots.

And many times, just the possession of the chariots, even if you don't use them, this is leveraged by a kind of proxy. This is the potential to do you damage. If you don't go along with me, I've got chariots and you don't.

And then the final category, bodies and souls of men, this is overt domination of other people. You are controlling their bodies and you are endeavoring to control their souls. You notice that there is sort of an ascending quality to this list.

You begin with your own possessions, your own image, your own security, and you begin to be aware of others and you want to build something that lasts. You want to impress with its quality and its durability. You surround yourself with fragrances, with perfumes, with an aromatic pleasing environment.

You put on a fine table that you partake of. You have sumptuous banquets. You can put on a feast, invite others, have them be impressed and look to you as a figure of importance.

Then you begin to leverage all of this into, well, if you need good beef, I've got it. I've got sheep, I've got horses and chariots, meaning I can provide a kind of power and security that involves the use of force. Chariots have no other purpose but to leverage and perpetrate force.

And then finally, domination of others. I will control whether I go into politics or I have some other form of economic or social power. I will be an influencer, so to speak.

And that is at the top where the bodies and souls of men are your playthings. Well, these characterize Babylon, the mother of harlots, who fornicates with the kings of the earth. Those who want to have power in nations look to these forms of expression and dominance to accomplish what they want to do.

And so they will do the dance. They will almost literally get in bed with this kind of appeal at a spiritual level. So when you look at Isaiah chapter 47 and you look at Jeremiah 50 and 51, you realize that God is warning his own people against being taken in, being co-opted and being deceived and entering into this kind of thinking and this kind of system.

Come out of her, my people, over and over again in scripture. We have the exhortation, go from Babylon. And it's not the physical city so much as the spiritual influence.

So we want to be watchful in these areas. What does scripture have to say about these areas? How can we not just heed the call to flee Babylon and not partake of her sins or her judgments?

What is the practical way we can do this? Well, scripture is going to give us that answer when we come back from the break.