

## Rev 26-05-03b

We resume our study now. We are looking at the significance of this detailed picture of Babylon. Two chapters describing this mother of all harlots, and we know that things that are labeled a mystery are revealed to us for our benefit.

This is something we need to take on board. So let's say it's a couple of days from now, it's Tuesday afternoon, and you think back and say, wow, it seems like on Sunday and the preceding Wednesday, we were looking at that Babylon. I wonder if I ought to be living or thinking or acting or speaking any differently because we looked at Babylon.

We should. It should stick in our minds. The Lord Jesus has expended a lot of time and effort and space in the word of God on this picture, and he has given it to you and me to do something with.

So we're trying to understand exactly what that objective is. So with that in mind, we are looking at this detailed description of what Babylon traffics in. What is the merchandise? What characterizes this spiritual entity? It is pictured in metaphorical terms as a city that is dealing in luxury goods and is boasting of self-indulgence, self-importance, self-sustaining.

I need nothing. I am a queen. I am no widow.

I am able to sustain myself, and I don't need anything from outside. You and I remember that the first step in salvation, in deliverance, in relying upon the Lord is to recognize our need. No one is going to come to the Lord Jesus Christ looking for salvation, redemption, forgiveness, if they think they're just fine.

Nobody goes to a doctor when they're feeling great. We feel a need, and we go looking for an answer to that need. To say, I have no need is to put oneself in the place where God cannot and will not help.

So as we look at these areas of pride and self-gratification that characterize Babylon, we want to look and ensure that we recognize our dependence upon God in each of these different areas. What are those areas? We talked about the sevenfold. It makes sense in Revelation, doesn't it, that there would be seven categories that are represented by these grouped items.

And you could probably break the items down even further, but let's just look at them as representative. So in the first group, the gold, silver, precious stones, and pearls. This is establishing a sense of self-worth, identity, and long-term security by what I possess.

We're talking about long-term. These are investment materials and status symbols, and you get a sense of self-importance, provision for self, and identity, establishing your identity from your worth, your accumulation, and comparison to others. What does scripture say we should be thinking in this first category? Remember Matthew 6, 19, and 20? When I say Matthew 6, what do

you think of? This is right in the middle of the Sermon on the Mount, Matthew 5, 6, and 7, Sermon on the Mount, three chapters of the kingdom perspective that the Lord Jesus says we should be cultivating, preparing for entrance, service, and function, and hopefully residence in that kingdom.

So Matthew 6, 19, and 20, do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal, but lay up for yourselves treasure in heaven. Right off the bat, where does our sense of identity and self-worth come from? If you want to talk about precious stones, precious things, we were redeemed not with corruptible things like gold and silver, but with the precious blood of Christ, Peter says. That's where our sense of worth comes from.

You and I are important in God's eyes, and it doesn't matter what people in the periphery think. It doesn't matter if they misunderstand, if they misconstrue, if they misapprehend, if they misjudge. We tend to develop defensiveness, and we want to explain, and we want to justify, and we want to vindicate ourselves in the eyes of others instead of resting in our value, our integrity, our character, and that God will balance the scales.

He will perform and execute justice at a future time. I don't need to be vindicated and justified in the eyes of people. I want to be vindicated and justified in God's eyes.

He will work out how much of that needs to be exposed and accomplished in this life. If I need to be God will promote me. I don't have to look for people and curry their favor or cozy up to them to gain advancement, standing, whether it's social, professional, cultural.

I don't need to wave an identity in someone's face and say, I have this heritage, or this background, or I'm this color, or I speak this language. God establishes our value. So Matthew 6, 19 and 20, Matthew 13, 44, the kingdom of heaven is like treasure hidden in a field.

We can be that treasure. People might look at the field and say, I see nothing special, but we are treasured by God. God paid a precious price for us.

When someone sees that treasure hidden in the field, sells all that he has to buy the field. The treasure may be hidden. It may be hidden in you.

It may be hidden in us. God sees it. The Lord Jesus saw it, and the Lord Jesus gave everything he had to purchase the field.

You get a lot of believers when you purchase the field. We want to be those who are valuable because we pay attention, we learn, we grow, we cultivate a pure heart, a good conscience, and a sincere faith as we saw in Timothy. 1 Corinthians 3, 12 and 13, all of this is under the first category.

Do you pursue gold and silver, precious stones and pearls? Or do you recognize that the Lord Jesus gave himself because we are represented as a pearl of great price? Our value is in God's

eyes, the Father's eyes, the Lord Jesus' eyes. 1 Corinthians 3, 12 and 13, there has been a foundation that is laid, and it is the Lord Jesus Christ. What do we build on that foundation? If you build with gold, silver, precious stones, these are spiritual treasures, spiritual values.

The foundation is Jesus Christ. Obviously, this is metaphorical building. We don't say, let's go construct a church building and we will use gold and silver and precious stones to make it ornate and impressive.

Spiritual gold, spiritual silver, spiritual precious stones, such a stark contrast to the literal ones that Babylon values and traffics in and tries to impress people with and influence people with. Our wealth, our worth does not depend on literal treasure. Build on the foundation of Christ with gold and silver and precious stones.

Or the alternative is wood, hay and straw. Each one's work will become clear when the judgment represented as fire exposes whether something is permanent or temporary. We've seen this many times.

We see the same materials mentioned, gold and silver and precious stones, but the valuation system and the nature of those things is radically opposite in Babylon or in the New Jerusalem. Do you look for present prestige and the approval of people or do we look for the approval of God in heaven? Hebrews 11.6, the one who comes to God believes that he is and that he rewards those who diligently seek him. Some of those rewards are present.

Many of them are future. And this is where our faith and our hope are giving us traction and expressing themselves in love. I'm not so worried about impressing people or establishing my credentials and my worth in the eyes of other people.

I would rather express love that is sacrificial to self and beneficial toward others. God will take care of wealth and worth. Matthew 6, 28 and 29.

Why do you worry about clothing? This is number two. Remember the apparel idea, the fine silks and the purple. This garment, what we dress in often pictures righteousness or lack thereof.

Are your garments soiled? They need to be washed in the blood and so on. Are you walking with the Lord in white? This is the righteous deeds of the saints pictured as spiritually bright, pure linen apparel. So Matthew 6, 28 and 29.

Why do you worry about clothing? Consider the lilies of the field. They toil not, neither do they spin. Yet Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these.

Solomon's earthly wealth and sumptuous surroundings and his own apparel pale in insignificance when you look at spiritual beauty, spiritual adornment, the righteousness of Christ that clothes us and adorns us, which we appropriate by faith and obedience. So when I'm thinking about how

much should I spend on my ball gown or my tuxedo or the clothes I'm going to wear to work, am I modest? Am I practical? We should be clean. Our clothing can be nice, can be sturdy, can be pleasant to look at.

But there is a haute couture level of dressing that is bordering on the obscene, what people spend. I believe, and this is not a judgment, just by way of an example, someone who was recently in the public eye had a name designer dress on and it was \$80,000. Granted, if you're in a position of prestige and you're representing greater things, perhaps that is justified.

I can tell you right now, none of us need to be wearing an \$80,000 garment. There would need to be some significant justification for that. We cultivate spiritual adornment.

You remember Paul talking about this and Peter talking about this. Peter says in 1 Peter 3, 3 and 4, let your adornment not be merely outward, rather let it be the hidden person of the heart. That's where genuine beauty resides.

So, the textiles that characterize Babylon are in opposition to that which God supplies us in the spiritual realm. And our adornment should be in that spiritual realm. The third category, when it comes to the costly woods, the ivory, the metals and the marble, Luke 12, 18 through 20, the individual who is counting his houses and barns, I will pull down my barns and build greater.

I will say to my soul, soul, you have many goods laid up. Take your ease. This also overlaps with the first category of intending to establish future security.

Luke 12, 18 through 20, God says to him, fool, this night, your soul will be required of you. What does your soul look like in terms of a storehouse for that which is beneficial, that which glorifies God? We are so tempted. The world endeavors to persuade us that the attributes and the adornments that people value are essential.

Well, if you don't have this, if you don't have the latest phone, if you don't have a shiny car or other emoluments, there's something wrong with you. You're losing the game. You're not accumulating the toys with which you want to end up dying and leaving behind.

Psalm 127, verse 1, unless the Lord builds the house, they labor in vain who build it. My God shall supply all your needs according to his riches in glory, Paul tells those that he is asking to look to the needs of fellow saints. Hebrews 13, 14, you remember Abraham looking for a city whose founder and builder is God earlier in the book? 13, 14 of Hebrews, here we have no continuing city.

You don't want to be a Babylon dweller. We seek the city which is to come, just like Abraham. We are strangers and pilgrims here and trying to establish a material presence, trying to have a gold and silver and precious stone adorned fortress is a waste of time.

You labor in vain to build that kind of house because death is coming for all of us and or the

rapture. The fourth category, this was the cinnamon and the incense and the ointments and the frankincense. Remember, frankincense was used both in life and in death.

So, having an emotional experience, having a sense of mystical presence, many churches and ritual-oriented churches, especially the stained glass window, somber organ music in the background and an environmental attempt to create a mystical atmosphere of holiness is a substitute for a genuine spiritual reality in our souls. How real is the Lord Jesus Christ? How valuable to us is the presence and power and guidance of the Holy Spirit? How important is it to think scripture, think promises and principles and doctrines in the practical daily accomplishment of our responsibilities, not going once or twice a week and being wafted into glorious experience by music and atmosphere? Matthew 15, 8, the Lord Jesus, this people honors me with their lips, but their heart is far from me. Doing things in the name of God, in the name of the worship of God, the 7-11 kind of worship music, you say the same seven words 11 times, is what Paul talks about in 2 Timothy 3, 5. Having a form of godliness, an exterior appearance of godliness.

It's happening all over the world on a Sunday morning. An appearance, an outward show or form of godliness, but lacking and denying the power. The power is God's, God's word and God's spirit.

And you don't need a worship team to call down the spirit. Music has a wonderful place in worship, but music draws out of the treasury of our soul, what we know and what we appreciate. It harmonizes, literally, an expression of genuine appreciation with content.

A reality of God that sustains us long after church is over. Because we walk by faith and not by sight. It isn't what we see, it isn't what we hear, it isn't some experience, it's not a show that is put on with lights and sound.

Can't tell you how many churches where I tune pianos, and it's a bandstand, it's a stage. It's not a platform with a pulpit so much as a stage. And there is a show, a performance that is put on.

Any unbeliever can go to a concert. I was talking to somebody just yesterday who went recently to Las Vegas and the Eagles, such as they are now with only one original member and a couple that came later, and many others who now fill in for dead and departed members. But the Eagles are wrapping it up this spring, this early summer.

They're not going to tour, they're not going to do live performance anymore. So their great last hurrah is at the Sphere in Las Vegas, which is a gigantic sight and sound experience. It is the inside of a sphere, so there's video that dwarfs the people that are actually on the stage.

But my friend who recently went there with his wife and saw one of these final performances was absolutely dazzled and overwhelmed by the experience. The sound is so good, the video is so good. Everybody has the best seat in the house at the Sphere.

That's secular, that's material, that's out in the world. It's got nothing to do with spiritual life, but you can be transported and impressed and dazzled. And much of what passes for church worship, far more partakes of that.

It's more the Sphere in Las Vegas than it is the power of God in the person of the Spirit, the content of the Word, and those who love that Word and keep it experience the very presence of the Lord Jesus and the Father Himself. I will take that over a season ticket to the Sphere, any hour of the day, any day of the week. The fifth category, sustenance, daily provision.

This is the wine, the oil, the fine flour, and the wheat. Remember, wheat was the more luxurious of the grains as opposed to barley. And wine is a wonderful thing to have along with oil.

You've got a beverage, and you've got that which you mix with the flour or the barley wheat. But anxiety about provision and daily sustenance. Again, Matthew 6, the Lord Jesus, 25 and 32, Matthew 6, 25, Matthew 6, 32.

Do not worry about your life, what you will eat, or what you will drink. Your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things. And included in there is what you will wear.

To be distracted by the press of circumstance, prices are going up, fuel is high, groceries are high, my income is limited. We need to be faithful and diligent in working with our own hands and taking advantage of opportunities God gives us so that He can supply all our needs. Your heavenly Father knows you need these things.

And as the psalmist said, I have never seen the righteous go hungry or his seed begging bread. Begging is not legitimate for a believer. Period, end of sentence.

But we turn our attention to spiritual priorities because these are also representative. Do you want to live in material Babylon or do you want to live in spiritual Jerusalem? Jesus told Satan himself, man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God. Luke 4, 4. God will supply our needs.

And in 1 Timothy 6, 8, Paul says, having food and clothing, both at the material level and even more importantly at the spiritual level, I have spiritual food and I have a garment that has been washed and made white in the blood of the Lamb. I am ready to dwell in the new Jerusalem. I am ready to take fruit from the tree of life that is on each side of the river of life.

I am qualified to walk in a garment of white with the Lord Jesus. I have made spiritual preparation far more important than material sustenance, although God has promised to provide that as well. But that's not our priority.

Our priority is spiritual health. Having food and clothing, with these we shall be content. 1 Timothy 6, 8. On what do we depend? What do we trust? Am I given a sense of security because I've got

a paycheck that is predictable, in some cases written by the government? Or am I trusting that God is going to ensure that whoever writes the checks, however the provision comes, by whatever means, and in whatever form, God is the one that secures it.

God is the one that has promised it. There may be immediate agency, but God is the ultimate agent that ensures our provision, not just material, but even more importantly, spiritual. The sixth category, livestock, sheep, horses, and chariots.

What does this mean to us today in our spiritual lives? Each of these we want to look at in terms of, here I am, fill in your name here, living my life. I'm trying to do it before the Lord. I'm trying to keep an eye on the future.

I want to be useful to the Master. I want to be a good steward of what He gives me now, so that I can have even greater opportunities. Remember the Lord Jesus in the parable has the Master say, you've been faithful in a few things while I was gone.

I'm going to make you in charge of many things. I would so love to be useful to the Lord Jesus, to express my love and appreciation to Him by carrying out something functional, something helpful now and in the ages to come. What better way to not just say we are thankful for salvation, but to express it by investing ourselves in the things of God now, so that we can do it in the ages to come.

To be faithful in a few things now, to remember who we are and why we're here as the body of Christ, to do before the world what He did when He was before the world, to suffer rejection and exclusion and vilification and insult and dismissal by the world as He did with a happy heart, with love and joy and peace and the rest of the fruit of the Spirit, because this world is not my home. I'm just a passing through. My treasures are laid up somewhere beyond the blue.

The angels beckon me from heaven's open door, and I can't feel at home in this world, this Babylon anymore. Note what characterizes Babylon, figure out where it impinges in our life and flee it. I want to give you a quick summary.

Isaiah 52.11, depart, depart, go out from there, Babylon, touch no unclean thing, come out from it, purify yourselves, you who carry the vessels of the Lord, we are believer priests, we carry the holy things of the Lord, we possess them, we bear them, we use them. Isaiah 52.11, go out from there, depart, depart, you have a threefold command, depart, depart, go out, touch not the unclean thing, don't even touch it, much less use it, come out from it, there's a fourth command, purify yourselves, we know how to do this, acknowledgement, confession of sin, 1 John 1.7, 1 John 1.9, Psalm 51, purify yourselves, you who possess, who carry the vessels of the Lord. Jeremiah 50.8, we saw this reading Jeremiah 50 and 51, flee from the midst of Babylon, God says to his people, depart from the land of the Chaldeans, be like the he goats that lead the flock, if you take a step, if you've got others in your family that you're concerned about, that you pray for, that you think are struggling with apathy or indifference or distraction from the things of God,

be the he goat, you leave, you take a stand, you exemplify departing from Babylon and hopefully the other sheep and goats will follow, hopefully they're sheep and not goats.

Jeremiah 51, two verses, this is why we read it for last time, I gave you 51 and all of you that know about context say, well, if he said 51, I better go back and read 50. Jeremiah 51, verse 6 and verse 45, flee from Babylon, how many times does God need to say it, escape with your lives, do not be destroyed in her punishment for this is the time of the Lord's vengeance, he will pay her what she deserves. Zechariah 2, verse 6 and 7, get up, get up, flee from the land of the North, declares the Lord, the land of the North is Babylon, Chaldea, for I have scattered you like the four winds of heaven, declares the Lord.

Of course, Revelation 18, four hour passage, I heard another voice from heaven say, come out of her, my people, so that you will not share in her sins or contract any of her plagues, so important. So back to our list, we're at the sixth category, livestock, sheep, horses and chariots, Psalm 20, verse 7, some trust in chariots, some in horses, but we will remember the name of the Lord, our God, it isn't how much money we have, it isn't how much property we own, it isn't how much experience or time in grade or rank we might have achieved where we work or in a family situation or in the social world, we don't trust in that, we don't assume that we have the goodwill of others that we've cultivated across time and they will bail us out if we're in a fix, we don't trust in those things, we remember the name of the Lord, our God, we have his name, we bear his name and we don't bear it in vain, we don't take his name to ourselves, call ourselves believers, call ourselves Christians, consider ourselves followers of Jesus Christ, we don't do that in a superficial way, Zechariah 4, 6, I quoted it earlier, not by might nor by power but by my spirit says the Lord, that's how we overcome, that is how we endure, that is how we persist and accomplish God's will in our lives, it's not by might, it's not by power, livestock, sheep, horses, chariots, because as the Lord says in John 15, 5, he is the power and apart from him we can do nothing, our ability to live, to grow, to accomplish, to not just survive but to prevail and to overcome rests in the Lord Jesus Christ, our Savior, the head of all things to the church, who loved us and gave himself for us, who loves us the way a husband should love his wife. Babylon measures strength by followers, by how many people listen, by who can I persuade, how can I get ahead, you look at all of the rabble that are waving signs and shouting and shouting down and trying to cancel other people and I'm not content to abide by the decisions made as a result of a representative democracy, I don't like the way things turned out so I will subvert it, I will negate it, I will overcome it by other means, it's evil, it's Babylon, I've got more horses and chariots than you, I will herd the cattle and the sheep out into the square and get them to protest and scream and yell and threaten, look at the threat level that exists now, not just for prominent people and that is very obvious but people who take a stand for values that reflect God and scripture are in danger, whether it is ostracism, whether it is getting fired, whether it is getting overlooked or being shunted aside, I think you're one of them and you don't get favorable consideration, you don't get selected, you're not chosen because you don't conform to the world, flee Babylon.

Sometimes the best thing that can happen to you is to not be selected and chosen in an organization that has Babylon values, many of us have experienced this more than once in our lives and at the time it looks like a setback, I lost my job, I lost my friend, I lost my social circle, I lost my opportunity in some way and around the corner God has something infinitely better, be patient, wait on the Lord, be of good cheer, He will strengthen our hearts, if we wait on the Lord we will not weary, they who wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength, they will mount up with wings as eagles, they will run and not be weary, they will walk and not faint, wait on the Lord, don't wait on an employer, don't wait on an influential friend, don't wait on somebody who's got an in, it's wonderful, God will use many of those things to bless us but we're not looking to the immediate agent, we're looking at the ultimate agent, God is in His heaven, God knows what is best and many times what looks like a setback is a wonderful deliverance and a blessed opportunity for God to do something even better, wait on the Lord, be of good cheer, cultivate love, joy and peace, look outward because the number seven category, so important in Revelation to compare your sevens, to watch for your sevens, is the bodies and souls of men, you end up being a curse and not a blessing to people in your periphery, now you are the one oppressing, you are the one influencing for ill and not for good, we sometimes are influential and considered to be important in the lives of other people and when we go sideways because our priorities are wrong, we have an often invisible effect on those in our periphery and the bodies and souls of men, second Peter 2.3, through covetousness, people who are inside the church will exploit you with deceptive words, there are the majority of church entities in this country are exploiting and deceiving people in their congregation because they want to build bigger and better, they want more and they think that it's all in the name of Christ, our bigger church will glorify Jesus more but it is covetousness and they exploit their congregations with deceptive words, sounds good but it's false, Matthew 23.14, the Lord Jesus, you can't go wrong listening to the Lord Jesus, I've tried to include at least one quote from Jesus in each of these points, 23.14 of Matthew, you devour widow's houses and for a pretense make long prayers, purport to be talking to God, it's pretense, Philippians 2.3, let nothing be done through selfish ambition but in lowliness of mind, let each of us esteem others better than ourselves, prioritize others, look especially in the sphere of the one another love category, beyond that neighbor love, beyond that those who are outside and beyond that enemy love, love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, pray for those who spitefully use you, that's the opposite end, the interior and the most important are the one another's, James 1.14 and 15 with which we will close, each one is tempted when he is drawn away by his own desires and enticed, when lust has conceived it brings forth sin, sin when it is finished makes you a citizen of Babylon and results in death, flee Babylon, watch for it, watch for its tentacles, its influences, its expressions, identify it, flee it, Jerusalem is our city, the heavenly Jerusalem, the new Jerusalem, I want to not just visit, I want to live there and so do you, let's close here in a word of prayer, Father thank you for the wonderful way your word not only tells us of things to come but makes it practical in our daily lives to prepare ourselves for those things when they do come, we pray that God the Holy Spirit will give us eyes to see and ears to hear, to be sensitive to spiritual truth now and in the days to

come so that when the Lord Jesus returns for us we will receive the well done good and faithful servant, enter into the joy of your Lord, we ask it in Jesus name, Amen.