

Rev 26-05-10a

Good morning, welcome to the Sunday morning services here at Grace and Truth Bible Church. This is the 10th of May, 2026. You can be turning to the book of Revelation.

We're going to continue our study this morning in Revelation chapter 17 and 18. We are looking at Babylon, why the Lord Jesus gives us this instruction regarding Babylon. Let's ask God's blessing on our time of fellowship and investigation into the word of God, and we will begin.

Father, how grateful we are for another opportunity to spend this time together, to receive the blessings of the spiritual gifts that you have distributed in our midst, to have the privilege of intercession for one another, to thank you for answered prayer. We pray that as we look at this portion of your word together and the others that connect to it, that God the Holy Spirit will minister it to our hearts so that we can not only understand it, but see its pertinence and application in our lives going forward from this moment, this afternoon, tomorrow, the week to come, and the time that remains to us. We know that if we don't make an effort to redeem the time, the days will be evil, and we know that your word can enable us to make the most of the potential that you've granted to us through our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

We pray these things in Jesus' name, amen. Looking at our passage, it's always a good starting point. In Revelation chapter 17, we have the introduction of the scarlet woman and the scarlet beast.

We've read this a few times. I think you're familiar. One of the bull angels comes over to John and says, "Come, I will show you the judgment of the great harlot "who sits on many waters, "with whom the kings of the earth committed fornication, "and the inhabitants of the earth were made drunk "with the wine of her fornication.

"Carries him away in the spirit into the wilderness." Notice in verse three where John is taken to see this woman. We're going to see a contrast when we get to chapter 22. You might just hold your place here and flip over just a few pages to chapter 22.

21, actually. The description begins in chapter 21, but John is taken to a mountain, and the new heaven and the new earth appear, and the first heaven and first earth have passed away. There's no more sea.

"I saw the holy city, New Jerusalem, "coming down out of heaven from God, "prepared as a bride adorned for her husband." A bride adorned for her husband with garments of righteousness and purity. Stark contrast with the scarlet harlot that is the mystery called Babylon. This is a mountaintop city.

This is Mount Zion. God is going to dwell with his people there. He will be with them and be their God.

He will wipe every tear, no more death, no more pain. Former things have passed away. I make all things new.

Such a contrast with what we are seeing in chapter 17. Back to that chapter. This woman is arrayed in purple and scarlet, adorned with gold and precious stones and pearls, having in her hand a golden cup full of abominations and the filthiness of her fornication.

Once again, could not be a sharper distinction made between the worst of the worst and the sanctified, redeemed, and righteous who will dwell in the New Jerusalem. On her forehead, a name was written, Mystery. And there should be sort of a full colon there.

Mystery. And here's what the mystery is. Babylon the Great, the mother of harlots and of the abominations of the earth.

I saw the woman drunk with the blood of the saints and with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus. And when I saw her, I marveled with great amazement. I would love to know the basis for John's amazement.

It reminds me of when he saw the seven-sealed scroll and no one was found who could open it and he wept bitterly. This wasn't just a mild disappointment. He was extremely unhappy about this whole situation.

In the same way, he is amazed at this sight. This is heretofore unrevealed. John has sat under the teaching of the Lord Jesus.

John has been inspired by the Holy Spirit to write his gospel, to write his epistles, and to write this letter. He's done the first 16 chapters worth. And yet, despite seeing the seals, the trumpets, the thunders, and the bulls, when he sees this scarlet harlot, he is amazed.

To get an idea of what the basis of it might be, we will look in chapter 18 and there are going to be those who will be amazed when they see her destruction. John is amazed at her appearance. We will see these others amazed at her destruction.

But here's the thing. We have seen over the last couple of weeks that there is a choice that we make between the spiritual Jerusalem, the new Jerusalem, and Babylon. Jerusalem is God's capital.

Babylon is Satan's capital. And these are spiritual. We know the literal Jerusalem was built up by David and eventually Solomon built the first temple there.

But Jerusalem for us is a spiritual capital and a spiritual destination. We are invited to be residents and have the right to enter it, to dwell there, to go to the river of life and partake of the tree of life that grows on each side of the river. We'll see this just a few chapters ahead.

This is a choice that we make. If we are not invested in, if we are not laying up our treasure in, if we are not seeing that when we walk the narrow road heading for the straight gate that leads to life, through that gate is the new Jerusalem, the kingdom of the father. Even after the millennial kingdom, we have the kingdom of the father.

That's where we want to be. That's where we want to go. One of many important aspects of doing so is to understand the alternative so that we can identify it and eschew it, as the King James likes to say, eschew.

Turn from it and pass away. Don't be seduced by it. Don't be deceived by it.

It is Satan's capital city. This picture that you see when John is carried into the wilderness, he sees a woman sitting on a scarlet beast full of names of blasphemy, seven heads, 10 horns, purple and scarlet, gold, precious stones, and pearls. There are two kinds of gold and silver and precious stones and pearls.

We saw this last time. There are those that will withstand the fiery judgment at the judgment seat of Christ. People don't like to think of the judgment seat of Christ for believers as fiery, but there is a lot of combustion at that judgment.

I would suspect that there is going to be more wood, hay, and stubble than there is gold, silver, and precious stones. I fully expect a pretty significant flash fire when my turn comes. And we grieve over that, and we want to lay up for ourselves treasure in heaven, where moth and rust do not corrupt, thieves do not break in and steal.

The Lord Jesus compares himself to coming as a thief, because even for his own people, there is going to be loss. If you know that there are thieves, you do your best to minimize loss. We want to understand what it takes to be citizens, to have a dwelling place that the Lord Jesus has gone to prepare for us in the new Jerusalem, not outside.

So we have to understand Babylon, and it is so tricky. It is so deceptive. It is so easy to be taken in and to make assumptions that are not true.

Think about a time in your life when you suffered deception, generally by people. It can be at work. It can be in relationships.

It can be any number of venues where we think things are a certain way. We are assured that it's a certain way. We're confident.

We make decisions. We invest. We exercise stewardship in many cases.

And then we find out it was false. It is so frustrating. It is so embittering to be deceived.

We didn't feel like we were being deceived, or we would have stopped at the outset. It seemed

right to us. And it turned out that the ends thereof were the ways of death.

How many times have we seen the Lord Jesus say, do not be deceived. Let no one deceive you. Be not deceived.

God is not mocked. Whatsoever a man sows, that's what he will reap. You sow to the flesh, you will of the flesh reap corruption.

Seldom as we are sowing to the flesh do we think about all of the judgment passages that pertain when we sow dew. It's a deception. Babylon is a deceptive, alluring, seductive capital city of Satan.

So the best thing we can do is understand it. If you want to avoid going down the bad road of a complaint, a physical complaint, you watch for the symptoms. As soon as there are symptoms, you go get treatment.

But you've got to know what the symptoms are. You're talking about tick bites. If you start to see a suspicious ring appearing around a tick bite, I need to do something about this.

I need to go get some kind of preventative treatment. This could be ugly pretty quick. In the same way, it is important for us to understand.

So what have we been doing these last couple of sessions? You remember in chapter 18, the characteristics of Babylon are clearly described in verses 11 through 13. What is it the merchants of the earth weep and mourn over when she is destroyed? What was their investment? What was their interest in that city? And we've seen it under seven headings. And I endeavor to give you a helpful acronym, which is Babylon.

We've got seven groups of things here and Babylon has seven letters. So in good seminary trained fashion, why we try to associate these to help us remember them. Here's a little pop quiz.

Way back at the beginning of our revelation study, we got to chapter two and three, and we remembered that there are seven churches. And I gave you a way to remember them. How many of the seven churches can you name? Each of them has unique characteristics and Jesus described them and wrote letters to them and sent their messengers information via John that we are supposed to understand.

So can you name the seven churches? Do you remember the memory aid that I suggested for you? I'll give you the memory aid. See if you can get to the seven churches from that. Every smiling person, thy sorrows feel loudly.

Every smiling person, thy sorrows feel loudly. It's awkward, but that makes it memorable. Every Ephesus, smiling, Smyrna, person, Pergamos, thy, Thyatira, sorrows, Sardis, feel, Philadelphia, loudly, Laodicea.

It is so bad of an acronym. You will remember it, and it will help you think through those churches. You remember the things about Ephesus, losing their first love.

You remember Smyrna, suffering, sorrow, and testing for 10 days. Be faithful unto death. Crown of life is on the line.

Every smiling person, Pergamos, Thyatira, the one in the center. Anytime you have a seven, look at the central element. There are chiastic relationships there.

We saw mentions of the same ideas and same concepts in the symmetrical chiasm of the seven churches. Thyatira is in the middle. It is the longest and most detailed letter.

We saw principles of Balaam and of Jezebel. Got to remember these things. The Lord Jesus came back and appeared to John to give him this information to give to you and to me, to us.

This is not a little map of what's going to happen in the end times. Let's all watch and see if we can figure out who is 666. This is grist for the mill.

This is traction on the road. We need this every single day. How many times does the word of God tell us, you have got to go from Babylon? We saw this in Isaiah.

Write these down. Isaiah 48, 20. Go out from Babylon.

Flee from Chaldea. Declare this with a shout of joy and proclaim it. Send it out to the ends of the earth, saying the Lord has redeemed his servant Jacob.

By extension, that is a picture of our deliverance from captivity, from slavery, from bondage. We should have a shout of joy that we are able to leave Babylon. We have been enabled by the presence and power of the Holy Spirit and the presence and power of the word of God.

That is how God's power comes into our life and in no other way. You can't buy it. You can't borrow it.

You can't imbibe it. You can't pluck it from a tree. It is the spirit of God and the word of God that enables us to live the life of God and to dwell in the capital city of God.

That's why we're a Bible church. That's why we're here this morning. Go out from Babylon.

Flee Chaldea. Don't even be in the same region with it. Get out of the town.

Get out of the country. And declare it with a shout of joy and proclaim. Send to the ends of the earth.

The Lord has redeemed us. We have been purchased out of the slave market. We are free and we should leave.

You think of Jeremiah 50, verse eight. Flee from the midst of Babylon. Depart from the land of the Chaldeans.

This is a different prophet. Isaiah said it in 4820. Jeremiah says it in 50, verse eight.

Be like the he goats that lead the flock. See if you can bring some others with you. When the he goats start going in a direction, the rest of the goats follow.

Figure he knows where he's going. He's got a good idea. Let's follow him.

Follow the leader. Jeremiah 51, verse six. Flee from Babylon.

Escape with your lives. Do not be destroyed in her punishment. Does that sound familiar? We're gonna see this in 18.4 of Revelation.

I heard a 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 what have we seen? Isaiah 4820. Jeremiah 50, verse eight.

Jeremiah 51, six. Do not be destroyed in her punishment for this is the time of the Lord's vengeance. He will pay her what she deserves.

This is the word of the Lord from Jeremiah to God's people. Zechariah chapter two, verse seven. Get up, O Zion.

Escape, you who dwell with the daughter of Babylon. Bad associations. Remember Paul in his pastoral epistles, bad company corrupts good morals.

Not the band Bad Company. I kind of like them. But bad associations.

Jeremiah 51, 45. We saw 51, six earlier. 45 says, come out of her, my people.

Save your lives, each of you, from the fierce anger of the Lord. God's not fooling around. And if he repeats himself this many times, we should be paying attention.

All these things were written for our instruction. Every word that proceeds from the mouth of God. Scripture is profitable.

Doctrine, reproof, correction, instruction. We have got to pay attention. Revelation wasn't there to give Jerry Jenkins and the other guy a book series.

It is for us to make application day by day by day. Isaiah 52, 11. Depart, depart.

Go out from there. Touch no unclean thing. Come out from it.

Purify yourselves, you who carry the vessels of the Lord. If I had time, we would go on and look at the passages that talk about having a shout of joy as you leave. But we'll return to our subject

here.

We want to identify Babylon in our lives. Where is Babylon? Is it on my phone internet connection? Is it on my TV set? Is it in the conversations I have with people who are far from the Lord? Yes, yes, and yes. We need to curate our time, our interests, our efforts, our conversations, our associations, what we allow to occur in our thought life.

You see somebody from Babylon, you see something from Babylon showing up in thought life, time to flee, separate. Don't sit there with the daughter of Babylon. It seems like it's always the women that are doing the seducing.

It's the daughter, it's the crafty harlot we saw in the first 10 chapters of Proverbs. It's this mother of all harlots. All of the seduction, all of the pulling away into illicit relationships and illicit priorities, self-gratification is pictured as spiritual prostitution.

Prostitution, more about this coming up. So back to Revelation chapter 17, she has gold, precious stones, and pearls. Reminds you of the kingdoms of the world that Satan offers the Lord Jesus.

They are real kingdoms, but they are offered in an illicit way. Satan says, if you'll bow down and worship me, I'll give you the kingdoms of the world and you don't have to go to the cross, which was a very serious cup to drink. The Lord Jesus asked his father if he could skip that cup.

Nevertheless, not my will, but thine, right? Satan says, look, if it's just about having the kingdoms, you want to rule the world? I am the God of this world. I'll give you these kingdoms, just worship me. And it was a real temptation.

The Lord Jesus resisted it, how? He was led by the spirit into the wilderness. The Holy Spirit is with him and he is quoting the word of God every time. It is the spirit and the word.

The Lord Jesus showed us the way. But we saw when we skipped forward a little bit, we go back and forth in 17 and 18, and we saw in 18, 12, and 13, those seven things. And like the memory aid for the churches, I've offered you a memory aid for these groupings.

Each of these seven groupings has four similar things. So we saw the first one in verse 12, merchandise, gold, silver, precious stones, and pearls. I've got them, I'll give them to you.

It reminds you of Satan's appeal to the Lord Jesus. Look at me, I'm adorned with these things. And we will exchange, the merchants are saying, oh, we traffic in these, it's a wonderful relationship, but it's perverse.

This is not the gold and silver and precious stones that is going to survive into eternity and be the treasure in heaven. This is the illicit, ill-gotten, and corrupt product of merchandise. Do you remember in Isaiah 14 and Ezekiel 28, turn back to Isaiah 14 just for a moment, talking about

merchandise and about these merchants who are mourning the destruction of Babylon.

When you go back to Isaiah chapter 14, these are easy to remember, Isaiah 14 and Ezekiel 28, because one is half of the other and one is before the other. But in Isaiah 14, and you have the fall of the king of Babylon, and that is the introduction to the section we remember that begins in verse 12. But verses four through 11 are talking about what's going to happen to the king of Babylon.

Then in verse 12, how you are fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of darkness, if you remember my translation from the Hebrew there, how you are cut down to the ground, you who weakened the nations. You have said in your heart, I will ascend into heaven. I will exalt my throne above the stars of God.

I will sit on the mount of the congregation on the farthest sides of the north. I will ascend above the heights of the clouds. I will be like the most high.

Yet you will be brought down to Sheol to the lowest depths of the pit. And you can continue on that road, but it is the five I wills. It is the opposite of the Lord Jesus saying, not my will, but thine be done.

And when we decide that we've got a better idea, a better plan, a better set of priorities, higher goals, more gratifying pursuits, we follow in this track. Now flip from Isaiah to Ezekiel. Isaiah, Jeremiah, Lamentations, Ezekiel chapter 28.

That was the king of Babylon. Here you have the king of Tyre. Verse 12, son of man, take up a lamentation for the king of Tyre and say to him, thus says the Lord God, you were the seal of perfection, full of wisdom, perfect in beauty.

You were in Eden, the garden of God. Every precious stone was your covering. Notice, in his unfallen state, Satan had these beautiful jewels for adornment.

The sardius, the topaz, and diamond, beryl, onyx, and jasper, sapphire, turquoise, emerald with gold. The workmanship of your timbrels and pipes was prepared for you on the day that you were created. This is difficult Hebrew.

When we went through this in Ezekiel, I suggested to you that Satan, as the guardian angel of God's throne room, this workmanship of timbrels and pipes, his job was to either allow or refuse access to God's throne. He was the guardian cherub who guarded God's presence. Angels would want to come in with a trivial thing, and the guardian cherub of the throne room would say, not today.

Come back however long they measure days in heaven. That impinges on Genesis chapter one. But he had the starts and the stops, literally in Hebrew, this pipes and timbrels, that's what it means.

It was, I will open the door or I will close the door. He's the doorman for God's throne room in his unfallen state, beautifully adorned. Just as you see the Marines on the steps of the White House, they're in their blues.

There is no sharper uniform on the planet, past, present, or future than Marine blues. And when you have someone at your doorway, you want them to reflect what's inside. And that's what Satan was.

The workmanship, his highest of all jobs, highest of all cherubs, was prepared for him. And the day he was created, you were the anointed cherub who guards, who covers. I established you, you were on the holy mountain of God.

You walked back and forth in the midst of the fiery stones, perfect in your ways from the day you were created until iniquity was found in you. God did not put the iniquity there. This is the expression of free will.

By the abundance of your trading, this is what connects. You can write in the margin here, Revelation chapter 17 and 18. The merchants, we're going to traffic, we're going to trade, we're going to profit.

We're going to exchange one thing for another. By the abundance of your trading, you became filled with violence within and you sinned. Therefore, I cast you out as a profane thing out of the mountain of God.

And I destroyed you, O covering cherub, from the midst of the fiery stones. Your heart was lifted up because of your beauty. Can you imagine the scarlet harlot sitting astride the beast with all of her finery, her purple and scarlet, her pearls and jewels? Nobody is more beautiful than me.

Mirror, mirror on the wall. You defiled your sanctuaries, the places where you spend time and have a presence. By the multitude of your iniquities, by the iniquity of your trading for the second time, it is trafficking, trading, exchange, tit for tat.

This is the reflection we find in especially chapter 18 with the merchants who mourn when Babylon is destroyed. I brought fire from your midst, it devoured you, and I turned you to ashes upon the earth in the sight of all who saw you. All who knew you among the peoples are astonished at you.

John is astonished when he sees the harlot. Everyone is going to be astonished when she is destroyed. You have become horror and shall be no more forever." And in the timelessness of the eternal realms, Satan is pictured as already having been destroyed, even though from our perspective, of course, he is still alive and well, roaming the earth, seeking whom he may devour.

But it is this idea of merchandise. Let's make a deal. It's a fine thing if people can negotiate.

You know, there is quote, unquote, the art of the deal, but be careful. The deal is what caused Satan's fall. I can leverage my position and do better.

I can compromise my standards. I can violate trust to achieve an objective. Warning, warning, danger, danger.

That's why this is in scripture, Old Testament and new. Back to Revelation. The woman has in her hand a golden cup full of abominations and the filthiness of her fornication.

What is an abomination? What does scripture label as an abomination? If I said, okay, close your Bibles, grab a pencil, get a piece of paper, write down everything you are positively certain is labeled an abomination in scripture, how long would that list be? I could think of a few off the top of my head. First of all, as you would expect, idols and idolatry. That shall not make unto thee any graven image, no substitute for God in our life.

I will tell you that one of the most sneaky, surreptitious, deceptive presences in our current day is the internet in general, that's Chaldea, and AI and Google in particular. It is a wonderful thing as long as you are careful, where is your faith? Am I trusting in a solution because I've read that 15 people tried it and put it on Reddit or Pinterest or some other place? It's one thing to figure out how to clean your carburetor, change a belt on a mower, it's something else when people go to the internet as they do now and ask questions about life choices, about priorities and relationships, enter into and develop relationships with artificial presences, talk to them as though there is a relationship, share their troubles, their fears, look for comfort, look for encouragement, look for guidance, look for advice from a bundle of subroutines, heuristics and AI that has been trained by scraping everything from the top to the bottom of whatever has ever been on the internet. Most of us, I don't think really are subject to that, but you look around in the world, Babylon has seduced and persuaded millions of people to go along with her priorities, to seek her treasure, to fornicate with her rather than looking to God for comfort, for guidance, for deliverance, not just our eternal salvation, but Paul says deliverance out of this present evil age to enable us to redeem the time, to enable us to represent the Lord Jesus Christ.

It is either we as the body and bride of Christ focusing on him, or it is we taking initiative on our own and being seduced by the scarlet harlot. It is a clear choice and it happens every day, all the time. We're going to pause here and take our break.

Having reminded ourselves that it is important to take a breath, sit down, have a little bit of quiet time, step back, ask God for wisdom and objectivity. James chapter one, we know we lack wisdom. Ask of God, he will give liberally and without reproach.

Look at our lives and figure out where has Babylon crept in, sneaked in the back door, gotten into our bed. I can assure you from the word of God, if we ask, if we seek, and if we knock and ask God to expose for us and show us where the tentacles and the insinuated influence and

presence of Babylon has gotten past our defenses, he will show us. That's what he wants for us.

His word will shine a light on our path, lamp for our feet. And if we hide it in our hearts, we will not sin. But we've got to stop.

We've got to take a breath. We've got to shut off the media, shut off the information flow, shut off the propaganda from the world in general. And Babylon in particular, and let God cleanse us and redeem us so that we can truly go from Babylon.

What is blasphemy and what is an abomination? She has a face covered with blasphemous names and she has a cup full of abominations. If we know what those are, just as we looked at what the merchants are mourning over, think about that over the break and I'll remind you of my crude but effective acronym. And then we're going to look at blasphemies and abominations.

What exactly does the word of God say those are? Where could they be cropping up in our lives? We'll see it when we come back from the break.