

Rev 26-05-10b

We continue our study here, looking at Revelation chapter 17 and 18. We're stepping back and looking at it in sort of a comprehensive fashion because the Lord Jesus gave us the book of Revelation to apply right here, right now, in the present. We won't be here for the beast and the false prophet.

We won't be here for the seals and the trumpets and the thunders and the bulls. We won't be here when the sickle angel does the reaping and when the Lord Jesus does his reaping. These are things that are like the Old Testament.

The Old Testament is past. These things in Revelation are future. It's the last seven years of the age of Israel, but we look at it, we observe, we interpret, and we apply right now.

Far more important that this has an effect on our thinking, on how we speak, our goals, our values, our priorities, what we watch for, what we pray for. We were reminded recently of our fun side study on watch and pray, all of the places where scripture says watch and pray. The Lord Jesus told his disciples in Gethsemane, watch and pray, lest you enter into temptation, lest you fall for it.

And of course they fell asleep. We want to be awake. So as we continue here, the question I asked before the break is, if Babylon is characterized, the foremost characteristics that we see beyond her apparel and her adornment is this cup that she's got in her hand and these blasphemous names that are on her head.

These two things intrigue me, and I think it's something we don't spend enough time thinking about. You say, well, you know, abominations, that was some kind of an Old Testament thing. I think in the law of Moses, you know, maybe a clam was an abomination or something, but I don't really remember too much about it.

This woman's cup is full of filthiness, fornication, and abomination. And when John describes it with that term, he expects that we know what abomination is. So my question, and I began this question with myself, what does scripture say is an abomination? Because if I know what those are, I can make sure I'm not even taking a sip out of this cup.

I'm not being seduced. I'm not being deceived. I'm not being deflected away from the sincere milk of the word, the meat, the solid food, the living water, not this cup.

Isn't it memorable that she has this cup full of these abominations, and God is going to tread the winepress in the person of the Lord Jesus, and that is going to be put into a cup that she is going to drink. She is going to drink the cup of the wine of the wrath of God. What she has done to others is going to be done to her.

The Latin term they like to use is *lex talionis*, which is the eye for an eye, tooth for a tooth, life for a life. This is a biblical principle that there is justice. God is a God of righteousness, and he is a God of justice.

He is also a God of mercy and grace, but if his forgiveness, his redemption, the atoning work by the Lord Jesus, if these things are rejected, there is no further sacrifice for sin, but a fearful expectation of judgment. That's a quote from the book of Hebrews. If you trample underfoot the son of God and put into an open shame, there is judgment.

So what does abomination look like? Number one, and this is fairly primary, idolatry, graven images. Thou shalt have no other gods before me is commandment number one. What is commandment number two of the 10? Thou shalt have no other gods before me.

Then what? Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image. Deuteronomy 7.25, talking about the inhabitants of the land, the Amorites. The graven images of their gods shall ye burn with fire.

You will not desire the silver or the gold that is on them, nor take it unto thee, lest you be snared therein, for it is an abomination to the Lord your God. The temptation was, well, we're supposed to go in, we conquer these people, we destroy their gods, but these gods are, they may be made of wood, but they are gold-plated and silver-plated. There's hammered coverings, hammered coverings of these precious metals.

So let's burn the idols, but we'll collect the precious metal. God said, no. The silver and the gold that is on them in Deuteronomy 7.25, even that which is associated with them, do not desire it, don't take it unto yourself, you will be tripped up by it.

There is blessing by association, there is guilt by association, there is cursing by association. So anything having to do with that, which takes the place of God. So we have to be careful.

If there are things that people put in the place of God in their life, where do I look for security? Is it financial? When I think about the future and what might happen with the economy or what might happen with international warfare or whatever it may be, do I comfort myself with God's got this or let me go check my 401k or my 503b or my savings, the security of my pension or whatever else it may be. What is our go-to when we are concerned about the future? If something comes to your mind before, my father in heaven knows what I need before I even ask him. I don't know how he's going to do it, but I know he is going to do it.

If there's anything else that comes to our mind, well, it's God and my savings, God and my pension, God and my investments, God and my assets. You have taken the gold off the graven carved images and included it. And God says, that's not just wrong, that's not just bad, it is an abomination.

Abomination. That's number one, Deuteronomy 7.25. Same thing in Deuteronomy 27.15. Cursed

be the man that makes any graven or molten image, an abomination unto the Lord, the work of the hands of the craftsmen, and he puts it in a secret place. I will go and offer the sacrifices, I will attend the services conducted by the Levites, but if you go to the inner chambers of my tent or my dwelling, I've got a little backup plan.

I've got a little bale in there, I've got a little ashtoreth. And just in case the God of Israel doesn't really cover it, I've heard from the people of the land that this works too. So notice it's not just the graven image that is cursed, cursed is the man that makes the graven or molten image.

That's an abomination to the Lord, the work of the hands of the craftsmen. I'm trusting in something I've done with my hands and I am now placing my faith in that for my security, for my future, for the answers to my desires and my prayers. And it's in a secret place.

Nobody knows that this is what's going on, except the Lord, Deuteronomy 27, 15. First Kings 11, five through seven. Solomon, what a wonderful start.

God says, I'll give you anything you want. Solomon says, give me wisdom to rule your people. God said, because you've asked for that, I'm gonna add all of these other things for you.

But in his later life, Second Kings 23, just look at the book number in the chapter, Solomon's later career. Solomon, the King of Israel had built for Ashtoreth the abominations of the Sidonians. Amongst his wives, he had gals that had never given up the religion of their ancestors and of their parents.

So when they came and they were unhappy, he accommodated. It doesn't say Solomon worshiped the abomination of the Sidonians, but what did he do? It's the same as taking the silver and the gold to yourself. Well, I'm not actually an idolater, I'm just benefiting from the presence of the idol.

I'm even benefiting from my destruction of it, but I'm keeping the stuff it's made of. You think of Achan after the defeat of the, when they go to Jericho and God said, don't take any loot, don't take any plunder, but he hid it in his tent. And then when they went to Ai, they got defeated.

They're sitting in the camp. Solomon built for Ashtoreth the abomination of the Sidonians and for Chemosh, the abomination of the Moabites and for Milcom, the abomination of the children of Ammon. The Ammonite God, the Moabite God and the Sidonian God, Solomon set up little shrines and temples for them because his wives wanted that.

Bad company corrupts good morals. I will compromise because I don't want to hurt your feelings. I will be big tent enough.

I will be tolerant enough to not make you feel bad about what you worship. That's what Solomon did. And the things he tolerated were an abomination to the Lord.

Goes without saying that child sacrifice, Deuteronomy 12.31. Every abomination to the Lord, which he hates, have they done unto their gods. Even their sons and their daughters, they have burnt in the fire to their gods. What is the modern day equivalent of this? We don't really see people doing actual child sacrifice.

It's spiritual child sacrifice. I will hand my responsibility off to others to train my child, to imbue them with a sense of morals or ethics or spiritual value. When this is an assignment that God gives to parents, if you're the parent of a child, this is Mother's Day, and godly mothers don't hand off responsibility to others for the raising of their children.

And it can be a hard thing, the practicalities of economics and budgeting and so on. Well, we really need two incomes to stay afloat. Ask God and make decisions before the Lord that do not involve sacrificing your children to the gods of this world, letting people in the world raise them, train them, and inculcate them.

It's one of the reasons we have so many problems today is why so many young people, as soon as they leave home, leave church. Jeremiah 32.35, they built the high places of Baal to cause their sons and their daughters to pass through the fire to Molech, which I, the Lord, commanded them not, that they should not do this abomination. Failure to take responsibility for children is an abomination to the Lord.

Handing them off to the world is an abomination. It's not just poor judgment. It's not just a not great choice.

It's an abomination to the Lord. Deuteronomy 18.10-12, there shall not be found among you anyone that makes his son or his daughter to pass through the fire or that uses divination or an observer of times or an enchanter or a witch, other sources of wisdom. While I'm operating the world, I need worldly wisdom instead of asking from the Lord.

It is an abomination to use divination, an observer of times. This is, you know, these soothsayers and these individuals that were thought to be the old man on the mountain. He's been around a long time.

He can tell you from experience and from observation what works best. Relying on, there's nothing wrong with getting good counsel, with getting information, but where is our faith? People would go to a diviner and absolutely do whatever they suggest, whatever they recommend. One that uses divination, an observer of times, an enchanter, a witch or a charmer or a consulter with familiar spirits or a wizard or a necromancer purporting to speak with the dead.

For all that do these things are an abomination to the Lord. Notice it isn't just the activity. The people who practice them are an abomination.

To what extent do we associate with those who are invested in this kind of guidance? We are to

come out from among them and be separate. We have to curate our relationships or we will be corrupted by contact. We will be tainted.

It's a harsh truth, but by not paying attention to the word of God, many believers have been tripped, have been deceived, have been co-opted and have been seduced into Babylon. The cup is full of abominations. Why would anyone drink a cup full of filthiness and abomination? Because they don't know that's what it is and they haven't bothered to check.

It's a deception. It's a seduction. Think of these date rape drugs.

Would you drink something knowingly when someone has slipped you a Mickey Finn, as they used to say, slipped you something that is going to knock you out and make you vulnerable and susceptible? The only reason people drink that cup is they haven't taken time to consider what's in it. We are commanded to pay attention. What is contacting us out of the world? Where is Babylon trying to get her hooks into us? This is one of the ways.

All of that is under number one. It all falls under false worship, false idolatry, a false object of faith. What is my confidence in? In my heart of hearts, when I stand before the Lord in prayer, am I really trusting him? Am I making the hard decisions that require faith? Recently saw again that great memorable scene in Indiana Jones and the, looking for the Holy Grail.

And he's got to solve these riddles. And the third and last one to get to where the grail is, is he's standing on this steep cliff and there's a chasm of infinite depth. And in order to get across, he has to just put his foot out and step forward into what looks like empty space.

And as soon as his foot comes down, he realizes that there is a disguised pathway there. It looked like there was nothing, but there was actually a solid path. That's our faith.

It may look to us like there's nothing to support us. God says, step out. I've got this, trust me.

Where's your faith? You figure, well, Babylon's the safe course. Look how many people drink of that cup and they seem to be doing well. Look at the judgment that's coming.

Number two, there are sexual sins that are labeled an abomination. Homosexuality. I'm sorry to those who want to soft pedal this and want to supersede everything with love and tolerance.

But the Bible says in Leviticus 18.22, thou shalt not lie with mankind as with womankind. It is abomination. Leviticus 20.13. If a man lies with mankind as he lies with a woman, both of them have committed an abomination.

Those who say, well, this is describing some sort of abuse where men were attacking boys or whatever. The word of God says, both participants have committed an abomination. This extends to dressing oddly.

Passed someone on the river walk yesterday was obviously a guy dressed in a dress, wearing stockings and one of these stranger sights you're likely to see in public. Deuteronomy 22.5. The woman shall not wear that which pertains unto a man, neither shall a man put on a woman's garment, for all that do so are an abomination unto the Lord, your God. It's not the clothing that's an abomination, the person who does it is.

That's serious. Leviticus 18.26-30 gives a description. I won't go into the details.

It's pretty grotesque. Leviticus 18.26-30. Do not commit any of these abominable customs, for all these abominations have the men of the land done, the ones that you are displacing, that God has sent you to judge, so that the land does not spew you out also. You will be spit out of the land of promise, out of the land of inheritance, the land that is by covenant deed allocated to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob and their descendants.

You will be spit out, if you participate in these abominations. And the list includes incest, adultery, bestiality, and other sexual sins. You can read the list.

That's number two. Number three of the abominations, dishonesty and economic corruption. Here's one that strikes a lot closer to home.

It is so easy to compromise, to rationalize, to justify in our minds, false weights and measures. Deuteronomy 25, 13 through 16. Do not have in your bag, various weights, a great one and a small one.

Here's a friend of mine, I'll give him more wheat for a denarius. Oh, here's somebody, I think they're rich. I'm gonna, I'm gonna mark it up.

They can afford it. So I've got a different weight than I put on the scale when they come. I put the little rock on when I'm measuring out their wheat.

This is, it reminds me of that old joke. You know, there's a sign in the cafe window that says, we've got all you can eat for 5.99. And you go in and you get a little tiny plate of food. And you say, wait a minute, I'd like some more.

They say, no, that's all you can eat for 5.99. You have a small, a small measure. And then for your friends and your cronies and scratching each other's back, well, I'll give you more for the same amount of money. God says that is an abomination to have a varying scale, a different standard.

And this goes not just for material transactions, but well, I'll overlook the peccadillo and the unfaithfulness and the participation in Babylon for this person, because they're family. This person over here, this coworker, well, I'm really down on them. I'm going to, I'll probably be a part of their judgment.

I'll talk bad about them. I will, you know, this is the difference between discerning and judging. We are to discern, we are to notice, we are to pay attention and know when someone is walking in righteousness or not, but to inflict a penalty, to gossip, to malign, to backbite, to turn people against them.

Now we are acting as the executioner. I will inflict judgment. We are commanded to discern and we are commanded to not judge.

I can know, but I'm not going to inflict a penalty. This goes back to the scales. Proverbs 11, one, a false balance is an abomination to the Lord, but a just weight, fairness, even-handedness is his delight.

Proverbs 11, one, Proverbs 20, verse 10, divers weights and divers measures, both of them are alike abominations to the Lord. Proverbs 20, 23, divers weights are an abomination to the Lord and a false balance is lo tov, not good. How many times does scripture need to tell us something for us to decide that it's important to the Lord? This extends to wicked business practices, underhandedness, acquiring things illicitly.

Ezekiel 18, 10 through 13, there is a catalog there. I won't read the whole thing, but it includes oppression, robbery, idolatry, and usury, unfair charging of interest. You have oppressed the poor and the needy.

You have spoiled by violence. You've lifted up his eyes to the idols and have committed abomination. Number four, moral and spiritual corruption is labeled an abomination.

Proverbs 6, 16 through 19, you remember this? These six things that the Lord hate, yea, seven are an abomination to him. Remember any time you have a seven, you want to watch for that central element. Do you remember this? You probably memorized it at some point.

These six things that the Lord hate, yea, seven, are an abomination unto him. Do you remember it? A proud look, a lying tongue, hands that shed innocent blood. I would think that that one would be in the middle, wouldn't you? Murder? What's in the middle? A heart that devises wicked imaginings.

Sin and evil root themselves in the heart. That is at the heart of this chiasm. Feet that are swift in running to mischief go along with the hands that shed innocent blood.

And this can be metaphorical character assassination, cancellation, judging, maligning, backbiting, gossiping. A false witness that speaks lies. Notice how that is aligned with a lying tongue.

Lying tongue and false witness that speaks lies. And the outside, the proud look goes with the one who sows discord among brethren. It is arrogant to sow division and spread discord, foment strife.

Our overt expressions of worship can be an abomination. Proverbs 15, eight, the sacrifice of the wicked is an abomination to the Lord. It could be a perfectly good sacrifice, qualified in every way, accepted by the Levites after inspection.

But if you're a wicked person bringing it, that sacrifice is an abomination. Not because of its content, but because of who's bringing it, the condition of the heart. Same thing in Proverbs 21, 27, the sacrifice of the wicked is abomination.

Proverbs 28, nine, he that turns away his ear from hearing the law, his prayer shall be an abomination. If you don't listen to the word of God, you're not impressed by it. You're not rebuked and corrected and instructed by it.

And then you try to go pray. Your prayer offered as a believer is an abomination to God. Sobering reminder.

Isaiah 1, 13, God says to his own people, don't bring me any more empty oblations. Incense is an abomination unto me. Remember incense is a symbol of prayer.

We've seen that even in Revelation. Justifying evil and perverting justice. Proverbs 17, 15, he that justifies the wicked and condemns the just, they are both an abomination to the Lord.

Vindicating people because we have reasons. Judging people because we have reasons. Well, I'm aligned with a political point of view.

Therefore, anybody that doesn't agree with my politics, I find fault. If you justify the wicked and condemn the just, it's an abomination to the Lord. And it is perversity.

I wish I had time to give you the word study on the Hebrew word translated perverse, crooked. That which departs from the way is the root idea of this word. So in Proverbs 3, 32, in the old King James, it says the froward.

It's like forward with an R that wandered away in the wrong place. Froward. It means perverse.

Someone who willingly departs from the way. The froward is an abomination to the Lord. You don't want to comply.

You don't want to comport. You don't want to obey. Proverbs 11, 20.

They that are of a froward heart are an abomination to the Lord. We already saw it up above. The proud look, the lying tongue.

Proverbs 12, 22. Lying lips are an abomination to the Lord. Even evil thoughts in Proverbs 15, 26.

The thoughts of the wicked are an abomination to the Lord. Doesn't even get as far as

expression. Man looks on the outward appearance.

The Lord sees the heart. Taking in something that is unholy. In the Old Testament, there were clean and unclean animals and foods.

In our spiritual application, what do we imbibe? What do we allow on our mental plate? What do we take in and process and digest? Deuteronomy 14, three. Thou shalt not partake of any abominable thing. And then they are described.

These forbidden animals, Leviticus 11, 10 through 13. They are an abomination unto you. Here's one that we'll have to talk more about next time.

Prostitution. Deuteronomy 23, 18. Thou shalt not bring the hire of a whore or the price of a dog into the house of the Lord your God.

Both of these are an abomination to the Lord your God. What does it mean, the price of a dog? In short, this was ancient near Eastern language of accommodation, talking about a male prostitute. Female or male.

And this bears on those who are excluded from the new Jerusalem by way of practice. Even if you are safe, when you get to Revelation 22, 15, I think it is. And it says those who are outside the new Jerusalem will close with that because it's sort of a summary of everything we've been talking about.

Revelation 22, you see it in 21.9 as well. There is a list of those who are excluded from the new Jerusalem. What a shame to be saved and yet be excluded.

In 21.9, it's 21.8. The cowardly, unbelieving, abominable, murderers, sexually immoral, sorcerers, idolaters, and all liars have their part in the lake which burns with fire. That doesn't mean they are in the lake. Part is meros.

Meros is the division. Meros means to divide. Your inheritance is in the lake of fire.

We've seen this before. They are there, but their inheritance is in the lake of fire. They're saved yet so as by fire.

And then you get to verse 22, chapter 22, verse 15. Blessed are those in verse 14 who do his commandments that they may have the right to the tree of life and may enter through the gates into the new Jerusalem, into the city. But outside are dogs, sorcerers, sexually immoral, murderers, idolaters, whoever loves and practices a lie.

Believers may be saved, but they will be in the darkness which is outside in the eternal future by failing to separate from, identify, and forsake abominations. And this is a list of abominations. So how important is it for us to know what these are, what they represent in the modern day so that

we can watch and pray? It's the power of God that enables us to separate, to be cleansed, to wash our robes in the blood of the Lamb and be qualified for opportunities.

All of the overcomer blessings we saw in chapters two and three. Well, we'll have much more to say about this because now that we've covered the very unhappy subject of abominations, we're gonna go on to look at what is blasphemy. She's got blasphemous names.

What is a blasphemy exactly? Is it possible for me to blaspheme or to tolerate blasphemy? I need to know what it is so that I can separate from it. And that's what we'll look at next time. We'll close here in a word of prayer.

Father, thank you for the wonderful, clear guidance, the light that your word shines on our daily lives, the presence and power of your Holy Spirit to enable us to not only understand these things, but to put them into practice so that we can reflect the glory of the Lord Jesus, represent him on this earth as his body, to do what he did when he was here on this earth, to testify, to reflect the light and show the way that others who see our hope can ask us a reason for it and be drawn to the light, be entered into a relationship with you through the Lord Jesus and become a part of the fellowship and the opportunity to redeem the time that we enjoy as your children. We pray that God, the Holy Spirit, will impress these truths on our hearts, help us to see clearly so that we can be good stewards of our time and opportunities. We ask it in Jesus' name, amen.