

Rev 26-05-20b

We resume our study now, we're in the book of Revelation, we're looking at chapters 17 and 18, the demise, the destruction of Babylon and everything that she represents. We saw that Babylon's impact in disappearing on the merchants of the earth is in this list that we found in chapter 18 verses 12 and 13. And it's merchants, it is merchandise going all the way back to Ezekiel 28, by the multiplicity of your merchandise, your trafficking, your exchanging, your covenants with individuals and with entities, rather than relying on God.

And this is how the world works. I would submit that we think of the world, the flesh, and the devil as three sources of temptation and challenge. But if you really think about it, the world is the means by which Satan makes appeal to our flesh.

And there is always this notion that as with the temptation of the Lord Jesus, if you'll fall down and worship me, if you will do a thing, you will be rewarded with the kingdoms of the world or whatever it may be. There is this merchandising, there is this trade-off. You will have a pleasurable experience, you will have stimulation, or you will have satisfaction, you will have a unique kind of peace.

It is as old as the first temptation in the garden with Eve. God knows that if you eat of this fruit, you will be like Him. You will have superior knowledge.

So when Eve saw the fruit that it was good to look upon and desirable to make her wise, if I go along with Satan's suggestion, I will get a return. I will have more wisdom than I currently have. Of course, it was the wrong kind of wisdom.

It is the bitter taste left in her mouth of the knowledge of evil as well as good. So this is something we can watch for. There is personal application here in the picturing of Babylon, of the seductress, as offering something in exchange.

There is something we have to give up. We have to compromise. We have to disobey.

We have to depart from our divine calling. We have to depart from our identity as servants of God and representatives of Christ. We are pulled away in some form or fashion in order to get something illicit, something with great promise, but it is hollow, it is false, and it is ultimately destructive.

And there is a far greater cost than the first payment we make. That's what is in view here. So this is why understanding this is going to help us see what happens to Babylon in the aftermath here.

So notice in verse 14, we saw this last time of chapter 18, the fruit that your soul longed for has gone from you, and all the things which are rich and splendid have been lost to you, and you shall

find them no more at all. We trade permanent, eternal blessings from God for momentary, frangible, disappearing, ephemeral pleasures in the world. And we wouldn't do it if we had our eyes wide open.

We are deceived. We are lulled. We are seduced by this harlot into exchanging something valuable and eternal for something false, momentary, and ultimately destructive.

So the destruction, and it is depicted twice, once in 17 and once in 18. Turn to 17 verse 9. Here is the mind which has wisdom. The last time we saw this phrase, it was calculating the of the beast, understanding his name and his identity and his image.

Here is the mind which has wisdom. The seven heads are seven mountains on which the woman sits. Rome is not a city on seven mountains.

Rome is a city on seven hills. The mountains are bigger and greater in the same way that this image is bigger and greater than merely imperial Rome in John's day. And notice the woman is sitting on this beast.

She is moved around. She is elevated. She is displayed, ostensibly taken where she wants to go, by the beast who is Satan himself.

Satan supports this woman because she is accomplishing his goal of deception, seduction, and merchandising her wares in exchange for loyalty, in exchange for merchandise. So there are also seven kings in verse 10, 1710 of Revelation. Five have fallen.

As we said, if you have any trouble remembering, just think of who afflicted Israel. Egypt, Assyria, Babylon, Medo-Persia, Greece. Five have fallen.

Those were all raised and departed by John's day. One is, that is Rome, and the other has not yet come. And when he comes, he must continue a short time.

This is going to be the popularly named Antichrist. This is the beast that rises out of the sea and is worshipped at the behest of the second beast that comes from the land, the beast and the false prophet. But they're not going to persist very long.

Why? We're about to see why. The beast that was and is not is himself also the eighth and is of the seven and is going to perdition. The beast is Satan himself.

He was, he is defeated by the Lord Jesus at the cross. Did you ever wonder why demon possession practically ceased after the time of the Lord Jesus? It is rare after that. There are a few holdovers, but the proliferation of demonic activity and the satanic opposition is broken at the cross.

Christ led captivity captive and gave gifts to men and broke the power of Satan. And his presence

as an active force has been suppressed to a great extent by the ubiquitous filling of the Holy Spirit for believers. This is what suppresses, this is what keeps him in check until it is taken out of the way.

You think of Thessalonians and Paul describing what happens when that which restrains is taken out of the way. As long as the restrainer is here, Satan is greatly constrained, constricted, suppressed. It will be taken out of the way when we leave.

When the church leaves, the spirit leaves with us. So Satan held sway from the garden all the way to the cross. He has been greatly mitigated.

He's not gone, but he has been restrained in this age. You don't need to bind Satan, he's already bound. You don't need to pray him away.

The Lord Jesus has already broken his power and the Holy Spirit keeps him almost entirely in check. In the realm of believers where the Holy Spirit is present, Satan has no power. It's a good reason to cultivate the presence and the guiding light that the Holy Spirit provides in our souls through his word.

If you feel the ugliness and the darkness creeping near, cultivate that which restrains. This means acknowledging sin and departing from it. This means walking in the light.

If we walk in the light, darkness has no power over us. No power. Not less power, no power.

It is only when we voluntarily walk out of the light through sin, through apathy and indifference, through distraction, through seduction, that Satan can begin to reclaim territory that the Lord Jesus already won at the cross. What a tragedy. So he is of the seven and is going to perdition.

Remember, these heads are attached to this beast. Satan used Egypt. Satan used Assyria.

Satan used Babylon. Satan used the Medo-Persian Empire. Satan used the Greeks and Satan used Rome to oppress, to enslave, to do harm to the people of God.

God, in some cases, allowed it. If people voluntarily depart from their covenant responsibilities to God, God can allow the power of Satan to remind his people of what they have been delivered from. It isn't permanent.

It isn't a complete loss. But if we voluntarily walk away from the presence and power of God, the inevitable result is to feel the presence and power of Satan. And all it takes is a voluntary return, repentance, repent, repent.

You see this over and over again in the letters to the churches. But he is going to perdition. The ten horns which you saw are ten kings who have received no kingdom as yet.

They receive authority for one hour as kings with the beast. With the beast. Because the beast is

going to destroy and completely set aside the harlot.

More about that as we proceed. But this is something to watch for. These ten kings are of one mind and they will give their power and authority to the beast.

Not to any of the heads. These ten kings didn't exist in the days of Egypt, Assyria, Babylon, Medo-Persia, Greece, or even Rome. They come into being and I think this is the technocracy.

I believe this is power that is greater than any government or any army has ever been able to achieve. This is what we see developing all around us in the present day. It is one of the signs that the end is very near.

Is we now have kings who are kings and don't need a kingdom. Because they exert force through technology. Controlling information.

Controlling access. Controlling and replacing what used to be done by people. Insinuating into every corner of life.

Whether it is educational, whether it is medical, whether it is technological. This is I believe the power of the ten kings. Ten is the number of fingers on each human hand.

And these guys are going to get their fingers into every pie. This is the ultimate in human power. The ten may be and probably is a literal number, but it also has symbolic significance.

Ten is the number of completeness in the human realm. You got ten fingers. You got ten toes.

And this is the ultimate in human power. Human beings invented the cell phone, the internet, AI, everything that computers do now. Everything that technology can accomplish in all of the related industries, in terms of manufacturing, in transportation, in control of the airwaves, in the perpetration of military conflict.

It is all driven by this technology that is new and unprecedented. Has never been seen before and will never be seen again. And it is ubiquitous.

It is everywhere. There is no place where this has not infiltrated and is having ever-growing influence. Look at the rise of data centers and the power to run them.

The Ten Kings, they are of one mind. They all have the same objective to be the universe of everything, the internet of everything. It can be in your refrigerator door, monitoring your groceries.

It can be in your car, determining what's working and what's not, how much fuel you have, how much air is in your tires. Whoever heard of such a thing? It is everywhere. It's like life in the fast lane.

Everything all the time. And these powers are controlled and manipulated by the heads of corporations who have arisen just in the last few decades to dominate the entire surface of the earth. Some of them are American.

Others of them are overseas. Some of them are in China. Some of them are in other powerful nations who have cultivated this technocracy.

It transcends and can even control traditional governments. Notice these in verse 14. This has not happened yet.

I'm not saying throw away your technology, throw your smartphone into the pond or, you know, turn off everything. This is going to happen after we are gone. You do not need to fear technology, but you need to respect it and ensure that you are controlling it and it is not controlling you.

It's that way with everything. There are so many wonderful things that are legitimate as long as we control them and they do not control us, right? This will happen later. It's something to warn us, caution us, and ensure that we don't let these things take over our lives because they are going to take over the earth after we're gone.

We don't want to be a model for that. These will make war with the Lamb in verse 14. And the Lamb will overcome them for He is Lord of Lords and King of Kings and those who are with Him are called chosen and faithful.

Then He said to me, the waters which you saw where the harlot sits, we saw this, it is the prophecy in Isaiah 21, the wilderness of the seas, peoples, multitudes, nations, and tongues, the ten horns which you saw on the beast, these will hate the harlot, make her desolate and naked, eat her flesh and burn her with fire. Why is that? Hear me now, pay attention. Right now there is exchange.

If you want to opt in to have advertisements tailored to what you browse, you have a choice. You can opt in, you can opt out. You can still get a phone that is not smart.

It's kind of hard, but you can get one that is just a phone and not a camera and a portal to the internet and a repository for social media interactions and so on. You can get what they call now a dumb phone still, but you opt in. You get email for free.

You get internet access at a very reasonable rate. You can use a browser, quote unquote, for free. You can get entertainment in exchange for watching ads.

You give your data, you expose your interests and your browsing history, your purchasing history, what you watch and what you don't watch, what you give a thumb up or a five-star review, what you like and what you don't like. It is all monitored. You give and you get, right? You opt in to the

system.

You opt in to watching things that may have salacious content or corrupt and perverted information, distorted information, twisted information. You decide who to listen to. If you don't like mainstream media, you can find a conservative outlet and listen to that.

You have a choice and more and more people voluntarily, because it's easy, because it's lazy, because it doesn't require work, I will let AI do my work for me. I will let Google find results for me and I won't do the work to verify and double check. I won't take the time to seek out better and more useful sources of information that are balanced, that are more factual.

It's easy to just accept the Twinkie that is handed to me instead of going to a specialty shop that has nutritious food. But notice, hear me now, we exchange, we engage in merchandising, in commerce for the things that we receive. You pay money, you get service.

You give your data, you get free stuff. Gmail is free, quote-unquote, in exchange for somebody reading every email you send and receive, which they do, don't kid yourself. Every single letter that you type on your phone reposes in the cloud and is scanned, is converted into trends, whether impersonally or even personally.

Don't think that every single keystroke is not monitored, recorded, and is in the eternal data repository maintained by those who will one day become the Ten Kings, in my view. So be careful. But here's what's going to change.

Why would the Beast, using the Ten Kings as pointed horns, turn and tear the harlot to pieces? She has been the of seducing and encouraging and promoting this exchange system. She's a harlot. She gives favors, stimulation, and worse, to those who will barter with her, who will trade with her.

When the harlot is destroyed, and this is partway through the 70th week, this is in the Great Tribulation period, Satan is going to say, enough. This isn't working well enough. There are still those who choose against the system.

There are those who use their volition to resist, to go a different way. The woman is still dwelling in the wilderness, out of reach of the flood that the dragon sends after her. There are still those servants of God.

When they are found, they may be martyred. But there is still resistance. So long as there is choice, there are those who are going to choose against the Beast and against the harlot, who will not fall prey to her deceptive charms.

Satan has been using this woman since the beginning of time, since the Plain of Shinar, Nimrod, and the Tower of Babel. And down through the ages, she has seduced and brought people under the sway of various empires, represented by these seven heads. Even the quote-unquote

Antichrist, the Beast himself, is going to fail total domination.

There's just too much at stake, and Satan is not going to risk the exchange system anymore. So he is going to take false religion, whether it is secular humanism, whether it is materialism, whether it's any of these other false religions, pseudo-Christianity, and he's going to destroy it. Satan himself is going to use technology to root it out, and force it into the open, and kill it.

Rip off its clothes, expose its inadequacies, and he's going to consume it. That's what happens. Notice verse 16, the ten horns which you saw on the Beast, these will hate the harlot, make her desolate and naked.

This technology knows everything about everybody, and whatever religion they subscribe to, especially worship of the Lamb, that is going to be rooted out with no mercy, no exchange, no allowance, no toleration. It is going to be rooted out. This and every other form.

They will make her desolate and naked, eat her flesh, and burn her with fire. There will be no option to do anything but submit. This was anticipated by novelists in the past, you know, the image of a boot stomping a human face forever has come up in the past.

And Satan is going to drop all pretense, he's not going to woo anymore, he is going to demand compliance by force. This exchange system will be destroyed and burnt with fire, and what remains is Satan himself operating the government and demanding total unquestioning obedience, or you will be destroyed. It's all out in the open, this is his last attempt to prove his point, that he can rule, no intermediaries, no proxies, no subterfuge, no crafty harlot, no Babylon mother of harlots, all of that is out of the way, and it is naked and open and apparent that he is going to force compliance.

It is comply or die. There's no, you can't give me enough, you don't have enough money, you don't have enough merchandise. This is what is coming in Satan's last desperate gambit to rule the earth and make his point that he can do as good a job as God.

All pretense is dropped and Satan himself is going to use these 10 kings, and I can't think of anything they represent other than the overwhelming power of technology that doesn't need a government, doesn't need an army, doesn't need law enforcement, it is absolute control over the lives, the bodies and souls of men. That's where it's headed. God has put it in their hearts to fulfill his purpose to be of one mind and to give their kingdom to the beast until the words of God are fulfilled.

Remember in Amos, does God do anything without letting the prophets announce it to us? John is a prophet as well as an apostle. He sees this coming, this prophecy, this word of prophecy has been given to him to give to us. This is the inevitable result.

And as we continue to do a dance with the harlot, even individually, even now, without departing

that system, without recognizing it for what it is, without taking control in our lives, we will end up under the absolute dominance and dictatorship of Satan himself with no out. You see this in the lives of people who come under the influence of an addiction, don't fight it and don't escape it until it is in absolute control and there is no other choice. The program of Satan ultimately ends in powerlessness for those under its sway.

You think that you can barter, you think that you can buy your way in or out. The end of this, the destination is complete dominance by Satan, total enslavement with no option. And God is going to put it in the hearts of these 10 kings to let Satan bring this to the entire planet, because we're gone and there are those who are going to be martyred to demonstrate the viciousness of this system, to show the fullness of its evil.

But they won't be martyred for long, be faithful unto death. Here comes the crown of life, whether you're church, whether you are the 144,000 servants of God, those who are so called to be faithful unto death. Are we willing to be faithful unto death and avoid the seductions that Babylon presents to us? Because this is the destination and you can think of it in terms of our inheritance.

If we fail to be disciplined, to be faithful, to turn our attention to the thoughts of God and the things of God and the beauties of the Lord Jesus Christ, there is nothing but darkness and a downward trend left for our future. So how important is it for us to pay attention? This is the reason Jesus gave the revelation to John to give to pastors, to give to us, to the angels of the seven churches, right? When you think of the sevens, here is a personal challenge. All of the sevens that we've seen, can you figure a personal application? You can go back to the seven churches and you remember the memory aid that we had, every smiling person by sorrows feel loudly.

So think of the first one, Ephesus. What was their problem? You've lost your first love. I ask myself, do I need to repent and get back to a place that I've departed from in some fashion? Have I lost my first love? Let me read that letter and look for the message of the Lord Jesus to me personally.

Smiling, Smyrna, suffering. Myrrh is at the heart of Smyrna. You will have tribulation 10 days.

Be faithful unto death, you'll receive the crown of life. Are there areas where I'm experiencing suffering and hardship? Am I willing to dedicate my suffering to the Lord Jesus, ask for his strength and his wisdom? We're not to suffer alone. We're not to suffer in our own strength.

We are never tested above what we are able to bear because God provides what we need. He knows what we need before we ask him. But if we turn to him and ask for strength, for sustenance, for wisdom, James chapter one, he will give generously and without reproach, give bountifully.

What a great gift. The greatest gift is wisdom. That's what Solomon asked for, and God blessed him enormously because of it.

That's Smyrna. Person, Pergamos. What happened in Pergamos? That's the doctrine of Balaam.

That's compromise. Balaam blesses Israel, but then he also teaches the enemies of Israel how to trip them up, how to seduce them, how to divert them, compromise it. Are there areas of compromise in my life where there's something I just don't want to give up? I'm not willing to change my path, change my priorities, change the game so that it doesn't trip me up and cause me to fall the way Balaam did to Israel.

Every smiling person, Ephesus, Smyrna, Pergamos, they were doing some things well, and they let that justify doing other things badly. Do I let what I'm doing well cloud my judgment and say, well, God will overlook these things because look at these other areas. Jesus commended some in Pergamos, but he said, here's what I've got against you.

Got to root that out. Then right in the center, Thyatira, Thyatira, Jezebel, foreshadowing what we see here with the mother of harlots, mystery Babylon. This is Jezebel, the seductress, wheedling, persuading, tantalizing, and getting people to go to bed with her, and sharing in her judgment.

The longest letter right at the center of that chiasm, the sevens are chiastic, look at what's in the middle. Can I find myself anywhere in Thyatira? If so, take steps. Sorrows, Sardis, Sardis, the dead church.

Just, you have a name that you're alive, but you're dead. Am I going through the motions, but there's not really an enlivening spirit of motivation to understand who I am and why I'm here in Christ? Not looking at the Lord Jesus and being motivated to return in some way the grace and the love that he expressed on the for me, shedding his blood on my behalf to deliver me out of this present evil age, to give me eternal life, to give me opportunities, to give me an inheritance, to give me access to the very throne room of God. Things that far surpass anything this life has to offer, anything the seductress might offer by way of temptation or momentary fleeting satisfaction.

Sardis, is there a part of my life somewhere that's just really dead? And if so, I need the Lord Jesus to come and raise the dead, bring life back to that part of my life. Am I dead when it comes to relationships? Am I dead when it comes to enthusiasm for the word of God? Most of you, that's not the case, or you wouldn't be here tonight, but we've got to watch for it. It's insidious.

It sneaks in when we're not looking. It tackles us from behind. It trips us when we least expect it.

Is there some creeping death? Is there something that's dying? I need to lift up the hands that hang down and strengthen the feeble knees, take steps, avail ourselves of the grace of God. God is the God of life and light. Read John chapter one.

If that's the case, feel Philadelphia, Philadelphia. This is a great church. Everybody wants to be Philadelphia, mostly commendation, almost no warning, but look at what Philadelphia is doing right.

Follow that pattern. And then Laodicea. Wow.

In parallel, remember the structure of a chiasm. In these seven things, you've got the center element. There's three before it and three after it.

And each of those three is a mini chiasm. So the first thing and the third thing correspond. So you look at Ephesus and you look at Pergamos.

There are some correspondences there with Smyrna right in the middle, then Thyatira. Then you look at the last three and you've got Sardis, the dead church. You've got Philadelphia, the strong church, and you've got Laodicea.

Laodicea and Sardis have a correspondence. Look at what they have in common. They are symmetrical in that sense.

But when you come to a seven, we can work our way through it. If you run out of things to think about, pick a seven out of the book of Revelation. You can go to the seven seal judgments and look at the four horsemen at the beginning and the fourth horseman.

Pay attention to that. It's right in the middle. Why are there horses? Why does it all have to do with what happens between people? There is the promise of the white horse and the bow going forth conquering and to conquer.

Here's something to think about. That very first horse, the white horse, and he rides forth conquering and to conquer. You know what the words are there? Do you remember? Nike.

It's the very same word used to him that overcomes in Revelation chapter two and chapter three. Are we overcoming in the spiritual sense or are we looking to the guy with the bow on the white horse and the promise of political or social or economic change? He's got a bow. He's going to shoot an arrow in the air.

It landed I know not where. False promise of conquest. He goes forth conquering and to conquer.

The Lord Jesus has already told us what genuine victory is. But you can think about those sevens. Think about the trumpets.

Think about the bowls. Are there any judgments? God judges things because they need judging. They are perverse.

They are opposite. He's not just being punitive. I don't like this.

I'm going to punish it. These are warnings to us. These six things that the Lord hate, yea, seven are an abomination to him.

The scarlet harlot, the mother of harlots and the abominations of the earth. What does God hate?

That's what he judges. Do I find any of those things in me? I need to judge myself so that I am not judged.

Think of the sevens. All of this is given to us for personal application. So important to remember.

And none more prominent than Babylon, her reign, her rule and her destruction. Because the naked rule of Satan is going to follow, but only for a short time. He makes war against the land, but not for long.

The ten kings hold sway, but only for an hour. And God is going to bring it to an end. What is going to survive that judgment? Hopefully you and me.

Well, we'll pick up our study again next time. Let's close here in a word of prayer. Father, thank you for the graphic and memorable way in which these issues are communicated and raised in our minds for our benefit.

We pray that God, the Holy Spirit will enable us to see clearly what the pertinence and application is in our own lives as we look to be those who are victorious over the wiles and the stratagems that Satan throws against us. The seductions of the harlot who operates at his behest. We pray that in all things, the Lord Jesus will be glorified in our fellowship, in our individual lives, and now and in the days to come.

We ask it in Jesus' name. Amen.