

Rev 26-05-31a

Good morning. Welcome to the Sunday morning services here at Grace and Truth Bible Church. It is the 31st of May, 2026.

We continue our study of the book of Revelation. We are at last in chapter 19. We'll take a quick backward review look at the end of chapter 18, since there are a few verses there we've not discussed in any detail, but we will spend our time in Revelation chapter 19 this morning.

Let's ask God's blessing on our time of fellowship and study. We will begin. Father, it is such a comfort to know that we live our lives not by our own strength, not by might, nor by power, but by your spirit.

We're grateful for the presence and the ministry of your Holy Spirit, bringing to our minds the word that we have reflected upon and learned about and discussed with fellow believers, the truths that tell us who we are and why we're here. Most of all, the testimony of Jesus Christ, the work he accomplished on our behalf on the cross in securing our salvation, not just from eternal destruction, but from this present evil age, from our fallen nature, from the effects of sin and evil in the world, the perpetrations and persuasions of Satan and all of the deceptions that he has instigated historically in the present and what he is going to do in the future. We are held securely in your hands.

You're our Father. We are grateful. We appreciate the opportunity to spend time in your presence, receiving the power and comfort and encouragement from your word.

We pray this morning as we look at this portion of your word and the connected passages that your Holy Spirit will minister to our hearts, strengthen us, give us clarity of vision and clarity of purpose, help us to remember that we represent the Lord Jesus as his body. We have the opportunity to reflect the light of your glory so that others who discover the need and the opportunity for relationship with you, whether an initial decision for salvation or to return to you and be nurtured and enabled to redeem the time that remains, will be drawn to you through that reflected light in our lives. We pray it in Jesus' name.

Amen. Let's look at our passage. I'm going to start at the latter portion of chapter 18 that we've not looked at in great detail so we can pick up in the 17th verse of chapter 18.

We're going to go quickly because we covered this portion but the great city that was clothed in fine linen, purple and scarlet, adorned with gold and precious stones and pearls. That's verse 16. That is the scarlet harlot.

That is Babylon. This description began really back in the Thyatira church looking at Jezebel and her fornications and those who fall into bed with her. This was specifically her attraction and seduction and co-opting of believers.

Now we are seeing her influence worldwide and across time. I cannot emphasize enough the importance of recognizing that Babylon is not a sudden appearance, a manifestation that appears almost ex nihilo during the 70th week. This has been the perpetration, the face, the female face, the seductress face, the harlot, prostitute, whoring face that Satan has presented ever since Noah walked off the ark with his family.

There was a little bit different type of attack going on before the flood. God wiped that out and there was a fresh start in Genesis chapter 9 and 10 and following. But from the time that Nimrod began to assemble populations and instigate the building of a tower in the plain of Shinar, Babel, Babylon has been a strategic face.

It's like a painted face, a cosmetic face. That's why the metaphor of this harlot is so apropos. This is the female sock puppet that Satan has been using all down through history.

We are going to see some of the manifest effects of this this morning as we move into chapter 19 because in chapter 19 there is an unprecedented celebration in heaven at her destruction. If she had sprung up in an hour like the gourd that Jonah looks to for shade as he's waiting for the destruction of Nineveh, springing up in, historically speaking, an hour after we leave after the rapture, latter half of the 70th week, and then it gets destroyed, it could hardly call forth the kind of celebration we are going to look at this morning. This woman has been perpetrating her whoredoms, her seductions, her deceptions, her deflection of people's attention, their assets, their stewardship, in the case of believers, since the dawn of the population explosion that begins after the flood.

Ever since then, it is all down through history. It has morphed, it has taken shape, it has moved locations, but it is, spiritually speaking, philosophically speaking, antagonistically speaking, as we have seen in these recent weeks, Satan's capital city. You are either on the road to the new Jerusalem, or you are a citizen of Babylon, and you've been taken in and co-opted and deceived and neutralized, rendered useless in the plan and purpose of God, if you're a believer, and blinded.

The God of this world has blinded the minds of those who believe not. Otherwise, the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, would shine unto them. It is light or darkness, it is up or down, it is our Heavenly Father or Satan.

It is a binary choice. By the way, anybody in Texas, if you hear a political candidate saying that God is not binary, that person has no biblical knowledge whatsoever. God has introduced himself from the beginning with male pronouns.

God's pronouns are capital He, capital Him. He is binary. The choice is binary.

It is God or Satan. It is the Father and the Son. It's not the mother and the daughter.

Anybody that says otherwise deserves to be shooed out of the room, and certainly not given any sort of authority. I don't like being political, but if a political candidate makes an issue out of God, I feel free to speak. I will tell you now, watch out, because this is the means by which democratic socialism, communism, and every satanic ploy is being sneaked into the room.

Speak out, tell your friends, tell your neighbors. Anybody that wants to redefine the God of Scripture is a satanic puppet. And if you want to know what I really think, ask me later.

So, alas, alas, the great city clothed in fine linen, purple, and scarlet, everything that is attractive to the human eye. This speaks of beauty, of wealth, of an attraction, such as you see perpetrated by those that go to extensive lengths to adorn themselves. Whatever is lacking in natural beauty, we will augment.

We will enhance. We'll cover up that which detracts. We will accentuate that which seems to be more attractive.

That's, we saw this in the Babylon acronym. You remember, and I've reviewed this because this is the measuring stick. If you're going to use a yardstick, you got to know the 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, and 12 on a ruler, right? Or 36 on a yardstick or whatever you use to measure.

Get a 50 foot tape measure, 100 foot tape measure. You've got to know what the marks are and what they mean. Our measure in checking to see if we have been unconsciously deceived, duped, unwittingly roped into the program of Babylon, check the seven things that the merchants mourn over.

B-A-B-Y-L-O-N. B, what are you building internally? What are you making of yourself? Is it gold, silver, and precious stones that will survive the fire of judgment at the judgment seat of Christ? Or are you trying to do the Maslow's hierarchy of needs and meet your psychological needs and look to human relationships? What are you building with in terms of your internal life? Are you happy when you're approved by people? Are you happy when you have financial security? Are you happy when you accomplish something, achieve something, cover some material or physical distance? That's B, building internally. Gold, silver, precious stones, and pearls.

What do you consider? This lady's got fine apparel and it is going to be taken away and she will be destroyed, shamed and destroyed. The A, B-A, what do you look to for your outward adornment? Building internally is one thing. This is what God sees and what we treasure.

What do we do in terms of outward appearances? Do we look as scripture encourages ladies to have their adornment, be their inner beauty, to decide that I will wait for friends or those who are interested in romance or even my spouse and my family to find me someone attractive, someone to spend time with, someone to have productive conversation and fellowship that is of an upbuilding and edifying character because of what I have on the inside or am I going to look for outward adornments? That's the A, appearances, adornments. The second B, building externally.

Where do we find our security? Are we looking for wood and structural materials that will sustain us? I've got a 401K or a 403B or a 503, whatever it is.

I've got bonds. I've got stocks. I've got something set aside for the future.

My security in my job, I make sure that anybody that is a threat gets looked at askance. I don't let my work speak for itself. I try to get in good with the boss.

I try to make influential friends. If they have a cocktail party or a golf date, I want to be there because I want to compete. This happens in so many different areas of life.

What are we building externally in terms of the kind of thing that is built on sand or built on the rock? Is it houses and barns? Fool, do you not know this night is required of you? Why? Why? This is the frankincense, the cinnamon, the spices, the aromas. What do we look for and consider? Well, that was a fine day because I viewed a great piece of entertainment. I was stimulated.

I was given pleasure. I have a pleasurable and pleasant environment. You sometimes go to someone's house and there's a little perfume stick burning somewhere, usually to cover up the fact they've been smoking a joint earlier.

That's the most common use of incense I've run across. Try to cover up the smell of burning grass. It does smell exactly like a lawn fire.

I've put out several of those. I will never forget the first time I saw the movie Alien. It was at a theater and the people directly in front of me had brought marijuana in and were smoking it at the secondhand smoke.

It made that movie twice as terrible. Plus, I was sitting in the second row with my neck craned back and it was an intensely unpleasant experience. But what do we look to for pleasure, for the ambiance and the self-gratification? Do we find the incense in prayer, gratifying as God does, communion with God in prayer and in reflection? Or are we looking to burn another piece of incense somewhere to cover up what's bad and make things more pleasant? It's the air freshener, if you will.

L. Logistics. What am I depending on for my supply? Am I praying as God encourages us through the Lord Jesus telling His disciples how to pray? Give us this day our daily bread. Take no thought.

Your Heavenly Father knows what you need before you ask Him. Be secure in His promises. Concentrate on being qualified to receive the fulfillment of those promises.

Not all promises are going to be fulfilled if we are malfunctioning, if we're disobedient, if we're apathetic. Then we can suddenly run to God and say, why aren't you fulfilling your promise? Well,

we've run out from under the channel of blessing. We have a cup and God is pouring from the pitcher, but we've moved the cup down to the other end of the table.

God's pouring, but we're not there and positioned to receive it. That's logistics. The O. What kind of overcomer? What overcoming? What do we consider to be success? What are we striving for in terms of goals and purposes in our life? Have I got a list of tasks I want to get accomplished and it's a good day, a good week, a good month if I get those things done? Or am I looking back at the seven churches and looking at the overcomer promises from the Lord Jesus? What did those churches do right and wrong? How do I measure up? We covered that extensively.

I won't review it, but what kind of overcoming are we engaged in? Is it spiritual to him who overcomes? Do we really have our sights set on being a pillar in the temple with these wonderful heavenly names written on us to partake of the hidden manna, to walk with the Lord Jesus dressed in white, to sit with him on his throne, to be given a new name, a white stone, all of these other wonderful overcomer blessings? Is that what motivates us and gets us up in the morning and keeps us moving? Or are we more satisfied with, you know, I really wanted to get that done and now it's done. I'm going to sit here and look at my freshly mowed lawn. Not that those are bad things, but they can't be the end.

They should be a part of greater and grander overcoming. And finally, the end. Remember the bodies and the souls of men.

Are we a blessing and looking to be a blessing to those around us? Or are we concentrating on finding ways for them to be a blessing to us? I need you in my life. I love the way you make me feel. I love what you do for me.

You're useful. I appreciate that you do things I don't have to do. And that's pretty much the end of my appreciation.

It's the bodies and souls of men. There are people who have slaves and they really love the slave because they're a good slave. But is that it? Is there nothing beyond the functional service they provide? And this is the bodies and souls of men.

And are we nurturing people or are we exploiting people? Measure ourselves. Babylon. It is so deceptive.

It is so seductive. So this great city has existed all along. It exists now.

It has existed in the past. This is why you remember when we read last time in Isaiah chapter 47, the description of Babylon and her destruction. How long ago was Isaiah? He's ministering right before, I mean, he's circa 600 BC, right before Nebuchadnezzar comes in 586.

Nebuchadnezzar comes three times. You remember 605, 598 and 586. And Isaiah and Jeremiah are both ministering during that time.

That's 2,600 years ago. Daughter of the Chaldeans, lady of the kingdoms. You'll not be called that anymore.

I used you to discipline my people, Babylon with its wealth. You remember what happens to Nebuchadnezzar when he's striding around, looking at all that he has achieved. And he ends up going animal for seven years and his nails grow out and he eats grass and he's insane.

And when he returns, he writes one of the most unique pieces of scripture in the whole Bible, which is a Psalm of praise to God for bringing him to his senses. Quite unique. You remember that from our study of Daniel.

But verse eight of Isaiah 47, we saw this last time. Hear this now, you who are given to pleasures, who dwell securely, who say in your heart, I am, and there is no one else beside me. I am at the center of my own universe.

It's a pre-Copernican universe. Remember before Copernicus, they thought everything revolved around planet earth. Well, there's many of us that can get in that mode.

Even if we're not characteristically that way, we can fall into it. There's nothing that'll make you more self-centered than being sick. And you know, bring me something.

Give me relief. Can you make me some food? Can you do my chores? Can you rearrange my schedule? Can you do what I normally do? I'm sick. I feel bad.

And with some justification, you know, when you're sick, you really do need help, but it should humble us. It shouldn't make us insufferable. I shall not sit as a widow, nor shall I know the loss of children.

These two things shall come to you in a moment in one day. And God has destroyed the manifestations and the perpetrations of Babylon down through history. You remember Belshazzar's feast.

And in that night, Mene, Mene, Tekel, Upharsin, been weighed in the balance and found wanting. Daniel interprets the handwriting on the wall by the finger of God. And in that night, all of that luxury, all of that excess, all of that self-importance and self-indulgence is wiped out.

This has happened as anticipation all down through history. Interestingly, in the book of Daniel, it doesn't say, and lo after the Medes and the Persians came in, there was rejoicing in heaven. More about that upcoming.

Isaiah 47, in a moment, in one day, verse nine, loss of children and widowhood, there shall come upon you in their fullness because of the multitude of your sorceries. Sorceries. This is appeal to powers and influences other than God.

This includes both the unspiritual, the ungodly, the demonic, and the satanic. It also includes in the Greek pharmakeia. And this is looking to drugs as a solution to provide what only God can provide.

There are wonderful medicines that we have from modern medical knowledge and technology, and it's a great thing. How do we view it? Is this where our faith and our confidence reside, or do we see it as a means that God can use to bless us? But the source, the authority, the one who limits and balances and guides us in availing ourselves of whatever exists by way of modern technology, everything from your toaster to your modes of transportation, your modes of communication, your means of staying comfortable in the heat and in the cold, do we repose our confidence in those and we stop at that limit? Or do we recognize that every good and perfect gift comes down from above, from the Father of lights, and we look past those things to their author, their source, and praise God from whom all blessings flow. The multitude of your sorceries, the great abundance of your enchantments invoking this, influencing that, roping people in, getting into a group and thinking the group is going to get things accomplished.

Verse 10, you have trusted in your wickedness. Notice the object of faith, the merit of faith is in the object. And if we trust in that which is not God, whatever is not of faith is sin.

Trusting in that which is ultimately wickedness, having a God before our Heavenly Father, something that we treat with more importance, more deference, more interest, more time, more investment of effort. I will build this house. I'm not looking at where the foundation is or what the foundation is.

I'm going to build this house and it's going to be great until a storm comes and reveals that it was built on the sand. You have trusted in your wickedness, Isaiah 47.10. You have said, no one sees me. This looks great to the outside world.

Remember the A in Babylon? Everybody thinks I'm great. Remember Mack Davis had that song, Oh Lord, it's hard to be humble when you're perfect in every way. I can't wait to look in the mirror because I get better looking each day.

To know me is to love me. I must be a heck of a man. Oh Lord, it's hard to be humble, but I'm doing the best that I can.

You have said, no one sees me. Have you noticed in some of these, James Cameron and other movies, there's this repeated allusion. People think it is so important when someone else says, I see you.

This people hanging in the trees and looking purple and what was that? Avatar. A couple of movies. It's so meaningful.

I see you. I really see you. It is jarring when I encounter this here and there.

You know who sees you? God sees us. And that's the view we need to be concerned about. I don't care if somebody else sees me or not.

And I shouldn't be so opaque with the difference between what is on the outside and what is on the inside that I have to assure myself, well, nobody sees what's really going on. I have pulled off this great deception. I'm a hypocrite because I have one face on the outside and another one on the inside.

The Lord Jesus said, the light of the body is the eye. And if you are transparent, the light of God that is in you will shine out from you. You will see clearly.

And if people see you clearly, so much the better. I don't need people to not see me. If in transparency, they look at me and they see what God has done, what God has built.

This should be our goal, not Babylon. The new Jerusalem is characterized by these wonderful translucent stones, transparent gold streets, transparent pearl gates. Transparency and light is the opposite of the kingdom of darkness.

And those who love darkness rather than light, because you don't see what's in the dark. No one sees me, verse 10, your wisdom and your knowledge, your human ingenuity, your ability to get along in the fallen world has warped you. And you have said in your heart, I am, and there's no one beside me.

It is me, myself, and I, if I'm doing well, that's the goal. My inner satisfaction, my personal gratification, my self-indulgence is the goal. If I'm indulged, if I'm satisfied, if I'm feeling good, this was a good day.

Therefore, evil shall come upon you. This is a historic truth. Evil shall come upon you.

You shall not know from where it arises. You're not going to see it coming. You're not going to be able to build a wall and prevent its intrusion.

Trouble shall fall upon you. It's really tough to get out from under something big that falls on you. You will not be able to put it off.

You will be powerless to prevent its destructive presence and power. Desolation shall come upon you suddenly, suddenly, without warning. Just when you think everything is great, the rug will be yanked out from under and you will not know.

Verse 12, stand now with your enchantments and the multitude of your sorceries. See if you can still stand with these pitiful excuses for human knowledge and power. Stand now.

See if you can stand with your enchantments and the multitude of your sorceries in which you have labored from your youth. This isn't just a momentary deception and diversion. You didn't just

fall for a short time.

This has been a pattern. That's the difference between sin and evil. When sin becomes a pattern, it graduates to a new category with new forms of judgment and consequence from your youth.

This is gentle divine sarcasm. See if you can stand with your enchantments and sorceries. Perhaps you will be able to profit.

Perhaps you will prevail. This is the vain hope of someone who has trusted in these things for so long. They think, well, maybe I can still get lucky and come out of this based on my own resources.

You are wearied in the multitude of your counsels. Let now the astrologers, the stargazers, and the monthly prognosticators stand up and save you. Think about secular material humanistic philosophy.

When you develop fatal disease, when you suffer a horrendous setback economically, socially, in work, in education, when you are slammed against a stone wall at 80 miles an hour, see if science can help you. When you realize the deficit and the shortfall and the corruption that dwells within each one of us and our helplessness to control it or to overcome it, then see what science has to offer. Can science solve sin in the soul? One of the things we will be looking at in terms of advanced technology as it develops, whether it is AI or things even beyond what we can imagine, the problem is for every great advance, there are corrupt and perverted people who will use it for their own ends and use it to harm and suppress, oppress, and eliminate those that stand in the way of their ambitions.

We have seen it historically when nuclear weapons were developed several decades back. Well, we've got to keep these out of the hands of wild-eyed pistol wavers who ain't afraid to die, extremists, and those who have a malicious agenda. If they get a hold of super powerful weapons, this is an existential threat.

Wouldn't it be easier to leave the weapons be and fix the human heart so that nobody would want to use them for nefarious purposes? What if you have advanced AI and nobody used it for scams, to steal, to fool people, and to evaporate their bank accounts into their own pocket? Wouldn't it be great if no matter how powerful the available tools and technologies were, people wouldn't abuse them? But the more they become, the more subject they are to corrupt and perverse uses because the human heart is unchanged. All of science and all of its braggadocio about what it has done—it gave you the cell phone, it gave you x-rays, and all the rest of it—what has it done for the human heart? Zero, zilch, nada. If anything, we have become worse.

So, perhaps you will prevail. Let now your astrologers, your stargazers, monthly prognosticators stand up and save you from what shall come upon you. Behold, they shall be as stubble, their complete uselessness.

The thing about stubble, it's useless. The harvest has already been taken. Stubble is what was left behind because it is of no use.

What do you do with stubble? It's fit only for burning, for elimination. Verse 14, Isaiah 47, they shall be as stubble, the fire shall burn them, just like the stubble at the judgment seat of Christ. Wood, hay, and stubble.

Did you build with wood? Are you hay? When you need something that is fireproof, that is eternal, the fire shall burn them. They shall not deliver themselves from the power of the flame. When God's judgment comes, there is no deliverance.

You have rejected God's deliverance from judgment in the person of Jesus Christ, who drank the cup of judgment. Remember what the cup represents. We have studied the cup, just as we have studied the testimony of Jesus.

Having and holding the testimony of Jesus is the key to exemption from judgment because that judgment has already been taken to himself by the Lord Jesus. This fire isn't going to be a useful fire. It's not a coal fire that you can warm yourself and say, I'm thankful for this fire.

It's not a fire to sit before. Thus shall they be to you with whom you have labored, your merchants from your youth. Notice the relationship here in Isaiah of merchants and Babylon.

There are those who traffic, who do exchange, who profit. We're going to pause here and take our break. When we come back, now that we have reviewed and emphasized how to avoid being in any way attached to or a part of Babylon, to go from Babylon, lest we partake of her sins and share in her plagues, this level of judgment.

We go down the list. I am not going to trust in man. Cursed is the man who trusts in man and makes flesh his strength, whose heart departs from the Lord.

He shall be like a shrub in the desert and shall not see good when it comes. That cannot be us. We know better.

Well, when we come back from the break, we are going to see how all of this, which we have now summarized, we've covered it in detail. We're moving into chapter 19. What fuels the celebration in heaven? Why is there so much joy? Why are there vast throngs beyond anything that could constitute the population of the earth in the 70th week who engage in this celebration? What does it mean to us? What does the 19th chapter of Revelation have in store in terms of our personal application? We'll see it when we come back from the break.