

# Revelation 16:17-18:24 – Babylon the Great

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- [ 0 : 0 0 ]     It's good to see you all. Just wanted to follow up on the very generous offer from Keith! You know how I feel about food. Linda has also offered freebies. Rice pudding.
- ! Pudding rice, yeah. So you've got to make it. So there's one bag left on the back table. So, you know, she doesn't want to go home with that bag, right?
- So please, that bag on the back table is not there for decoration. We're not some like weirdo kind of pudding rice, welcome to church kind of thing. You know, so, you know, help yourself at the back.
- And with that vein, smooth segue into we're having lunch today. So please stick around for lunch after service today. If you haven't brought anything with you to share, don't worry. I'm sure that'll be enough. It'll just be great to hang out with you. So that's going to happen directly after service this morning. Is that okay? Great. So this morning we're in Revelation chapter 16. And we are in bed down, right? We are going to finish 16. We're going to finish 17. And we're going to finish 18 today.
- So I know looking at a text, there's lots of words, but we've covered loads of it already. Okay. And when we get to chapter 18, you'll see that actually chapter 18 is just a description of something that happens that we've already, we've already like, we've already looked at. Okay.
- [ 1 : 4 8 ]     So what we, what we see in some, just some big overarching, a big overarching picture, if you like. And then I'm going to give you five, five lessons to learn from.
- Which is the challenge. Okay. So the overarching kind of idea is that we're going to see a vivid description of Babylon. And we're all going to feel, and we all do feel the lure and allure of Babylon.
- Right. The temptation of the world and all of its problems and chaos. How do we navigate that as Christians? So that's the big picture. The five things I want to draw out from the text. I'm going to put on the screen now. Well, I'm not going to do it. That's like, I'm going to do it. I'm not going to do it. It's going to appear on the screen now. Someone else is going to wave that magic wand.
- There it is. So five things I want to draw out of the text for us that we'll identify as we go through. But as you can imagine, we're covering two and a half chapters this morning or two and a bit chapters. So we're going to move through fairly quickly. We won't stop for a long time on, on any of these, but just for you to think about how these verses and what these verses teach us.
- They teach us to anticipate the ultimate victory that we have. You know, and we've just shared in, I think, a wonderful but poignant moment as well as we grieve with those who grieve this morning.
- [ 3 : 1 8 ]     You know, this whole thing, we anticipate a future victory, don't we? And that's the thing that, you know, I see in this chapter and think we can hold on to is that what the angel does for us, I'm kind of getting carried away already, is that the angel points us to chapter 19. And so we learn to anticipate ultimate victory. Also that we learn to, it teaches us to pursue unity within the church. It teaches us to submit to the Spirit's work in us.

It also helps us to find that our true treasure is Christ. And then finally, it helps us to embrace the identity of the redeemed.

So those, if you're scribbling down nervously, they'll come up on the screen. If you want those dropped into your inbox at eight o'clock on a Sunday morning, speak to Chris and he'll make that magic work.

Okay, so we're picking up from chapter 16. So chapter 16, verse 17 says this, the seventh angel pulled out his bowl into the air and a loud voice came out of the temple from the throne saying, it is done. And there were flashings of lightning, rumblings, peals of thunder and a great earthquake such as there's never been since the man was on the earth. So great was that earthquake.

The great city was split into three parts. The cities of the nations fell and God remembered Babylon the great to make a drain of the cup of the wine of the fury of his wrath. And every island fled away and no mountain was to be found. And great hailstones, about 100 pounds each, fell from heaven on people.

[ 4 : 56 ] And they cursed God for the plague of the hail because the plague was so severe. So we looked at this a little bit last week as we discussed what is Euphrates, what is Armageddon, what is Babylon. We're not going to revisit that, but just to say verse 19 contains the phrase Babylon.

And to understand chapter 17 and 18, we need to understand what Babylon is. So turn with me all the way back to the beginning of your Bibles in Genesis chapter 1. And I want to set this up so that we understand Babylon as being something different from the heap of ruins that is in eastern Iraq. But we also understand it as something different, as something purely just symbolic.

So that's what we said last week. Last week we said it was almost certainly not the ruins that lay in eastern Iraq today. What John is doing is using the term Babylon to describe a type.

It's a typology of Israel's arch enemy. So to understand that, again, Genesis 1, where we read about God's command for all mankind.

This is what he says in chapter 1, verse 28. Notice these three words, fill the earth.

[ 6 : 24 ] This is really important because this is one of the first major commands that are universally given to people. And it's important because the reason that God wanted people to be fruitful and then multiply and fill the earth was so that they could spread the nature of God.

They could spread the name of God wherever they went. All right. Now, you know that a lot of things happened in the next few chapters, which we won't go into. But eventually we get to chapter 9.

Just flick over a couple of pages to you right there. Where in chapter 9, God repeats that command. So we've gone through the fall. We've gone through the generations, chapter 5.

We've gone through Noah. We've gone through the flood. And now chapter 9, God repeats this command. And he says to Noah and his sons, basically they're the people left on earth.

He says, be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth. Well, that's chapter 1, verse 28, right? Chapter 1, verse 26. So 28. So he says, I want you, Noah, and your family to go out and take my name, my character, my goodness, so that people would know me.

[ 7 : 36 ] That's what God is saying. Now, what happened next in chapter 10 is in direct defiance of that command. So check out chapter 10.

We read that Cush, who's the grandson of Noah. This is verse 8. Father Nimrod.

So the great grandson of Noah. He was the first on the earth to be a mighty man. And we're not going to make much of the phrase mighty man. That's another study. He was a mighty hunter.

Again, another study before the Lord. Therefore it said, like Nimrod, a mighty hunter before the Lord. Which we don't use that phrase anymore, right? Like, we don't come out of Tesco and I'm like, I had victory. I'm like a mighty hunter before the Lord.

We don't do that. But evidently in Moses' day, that was like a common phrase. All right? So the literal idea is that Nimrod, in those verses, was against God.

[ 8 : 36 ] Right? Now, verse 10 says that beginning of his kingdom was Babel, which means confusion or chaos, where we get the word Babylon from. So we've got this guy, this mighty hunter before the Lord, who was against God, who was the beginning of his kingdom.

He was Babylon. Verse 11 says, from that land he went into Assyria and built Nineveh, right? Of the Jonah type. Okay? So Babylon is the first city listed here that Nimrod built.

And we're told that at Babel, the following thing happened. In Genesis 11, verse 1, the people migrated from the east. They found a plain in the land of Shinar and settled there.

And they said to one another, come on, let's make bricks and burn them thoroughly. And they had bricks for stone and butemen for mortar. And they said, come, let us build ourselves a city and a tower with its top two in the heavens.

And let us make a name for ourselves, lest we just be dispersed over the face of the whole earth. Now, these individuals wanted to build an ancient tower. And the fact of doing that, that was in defiance to the command of God.

[ 9 : 48 ] They are essentially saying, we're not going to speak of and represent God on earth. They didn't want the earth to be known to God. Or they didn't want God to be known to the earth.

They wanted themselves to be known. So verse 4 says, let us make a name for who? Ourselves. So Babylon, right at the beginning of the Bible, represents defiance against God.

And the exaltation of man. Whenever you get those two things, you also get something not far away called idolatry. Since we're created to worship, when you remove God, the desire and the need doesn't go away to worship.

Worship remains. You have to find something to worship. And that's what we read about in verse 4. They said, let us build ourselves a city and a tower with its top in the heavens. And most people think the tower resembles something like this.

Right? So, like a step tower with some kind of temple building on top. And actually, the remains of such towers have actually been found throughout the region.

[ 10 : 54 ] Even in Babylon, the Babylon ruins that I showed you last week, that is the remains of one of the towers that dates to the 9th century. Right? There's nothing else there. And that's why it's shot from over the top.

Because if you just see it standing, there's nothing there. But that's the kind of like the satellite view, Google image view, of that tower.

That one dedicated to the god Marduk. We also know that two Babylonian kings, Nebuchadnezzar and Nebuchadnezzar, went and rebuilt that temple or that tower.

And enlarged it before it was then destroyed. Now, we don't know what was on top of the building. But from the suggestion in verse 4, we're told that there was a tower with its top to the heavens.

So, it may have been some kind of temple. But the big idea is that the Babylon in chapter 16 comes from this idea of defiance, man exalting himself, and idolatry.

[ 12 : 00 ] That's where it finds its history. All right? And we can get wrapped up in a lot of the details. But if we go and remember those three things, it helps us understand what John is talking about when he's talking about Babylon in chapter 16.

He's talking about a world system, a world chaos system dominated by idolatry. And because idolatry goes against God's promises, they also go against Israel.

And they become Israel's arch enemy. And we talked about last week how Babylon was pictured in Jewish kind of culture as the arch enemy. Because Babylon was the enemy that went and destroyed the temple.

And obviously sent the Jews into exile. So, if you want to describe something on that scale, defiance, idolatry, man-centeredness, arch enemy of Israel, there's only one place you're going and that's Babylon.

So, the whole thing is a setup. Do you remember we talked about this last week? The whole thing is a setup because we expect, or as we're reading the text, we expect the Medo-Persians, the kings from the east in chapter 16 to come.

[ 13 : 16 ] The kings from the east of the Medo-Persians, they came and rescued Israel. And actually what we found in chapter 16 is that the Medo-Persians, the kings from the east, came and joined forces with everybody else.

And we're left with this question. Well, who then is going to save? And so, John is basically saying, look, this is the totality of the problem.

Defiance against God, idolatry, arch enemy of Israel. And the best way to refer to them and to refer to the last world empire as Daniel saw it is to describe it as Babylon.

It's just like Babylon all over again, John is saying, but it's much, much worse. So, with that, you know, when you think about it, that's kind of the problem that we all face, isn't it?

Those three things, like defiance, idolatry, man-centeredness. Whether Babylon appears as Egypt or as Assyria or as Babylon itself or as Rome or as something else yet to come, the problem every time is the allure of Babylon.

[ 14 : 21 ] We live in a world that today entices us with all of its promises. It looks into our hearts and it says, it calls to us, doesn't it? With all the promises that are empty.

And just as the churches that John is writing to there in Asia Minor were facing that problem, aren't we too facing that problem about being faithful to God, about remaining faithful to God, about remaining true to Him and not drifting off to find our hope and satisfaction in other things?

And look, I think it's okay for us to wrestle with the temptation to conform to the values and systems that oppose the kingdom of God. I think it's okay for us to admit that.

It's okay to admit that sometimes, often, we're challenged in that area. And I think it's okay because the New Testament writers write about it lots. But Paul says this.

He said, look, you have to remember, in Ephesians 6, he says, you have to remember, you don't wrestle against flesh and blood. But it's not Prince Charles or Camilla, right?

[ 15 : 30 ] But it's the rulers against the authorities, against the cosmic powers of the present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in heavenly places. And what we're seeing in this depiction of Babylon is a chaos system that is fueled by and directed by demonic powers.

And we actually saw that last time, didn't we? The whole thing with the frogs, which is a little bit weird. But they were demons. And the text clearly says that. Yeah, Deuteronomy 32, verse 8, is talking about God.

Back then, God giving the nations to the sons of God. And again, we don't have time to go into what that is. But God giving the nations to the sons of God, which before we've talked about as being the angelic council.

And so this, in many ways, is God reclaiming the nations. Talks about in the Old Testament, the nations will one day come and bow before him and worship him.

That's what he's doing. He's reclaiming the nations. And even where we said last week that Armageddon probably refers to the place of assembly, where the fallen angels will gather on the last day.

[ 16 : 48 ] Here we see a result of their work. And so this is the condition that we often find ourselves in. Yearning for deliverance.

From the clutches of Babylon. So let's just jump into chapter 17. To see the downfall of Babylon, which is ultimately the judgment of all that that opposed God's rule.

So verse 1 says, Then one of the seven angels, who had the seven bowls, that's the seven bowls of judgment, came and said to me, Come, I will show you.

Now look, pause there, because I found quite a bit of encouragement in those verses. Because we've missed something if we rush ahead.

The angel says to John, Come, I will show you. And he's going to be shown a description of Babylon. But flick over to chapter 21, verse 9.

[ 17 : 45 ] And in 21, verse 9, this is what we read. Then came one of the seven angels who had the seven bowls of the seven last plagues. Same guy, right?

So he's talking to one guy there in chapter 17. One angel. And the other angel later on rocks up and he goes, Oh, come, I will show you. And this time he's showing the bride, the wife of the Lamb.

And so hold that on your mind, because John is being shown a contrast between what is unfaithful and what is faithful. There are two stories. There is the story of the unfaithful and the story of the faithful.

And it's good for us to be reminded again and for us to know that there are two stories. Because the angel here is anticipating ultimate victory.

He's not just saying, Come, I will show you. And then just get all kind of down and depressed and look at the world. Look how terrible it is. But no final answer. You know, these things are structured in a way.

[ 18 : 52 ] Come, I will show you. Then come, I will show you. And it's supposed to make us look forward. Come, I will show you. But don't forget. Come, I will show you. I don't think we have any idea currently, do we?

Of what God is doing with us. We miss that so often. I know sometimes there is a temptation to give up. I know sometimes there is a temptation to find reasons why life is difficult.

Sometimes we don't need to find reasons. We all live such busy and sometimes draining lives, don't we? But a constant reminder of the New Testament writers is this.

Don't give up. There's something coming. Come, I will show you. That's the idea. James says this. He said, Blessed is the man who remains steadfast under trial.

For when he has stood the test, he will receive the crown of life. I mean, oftentimes, if I'm honest, I don't get past the first half of that verse. Blessed is the man who remains steadfast under trial.

[ 20 : 01 ] I'm like, ah. For he will receive. Come, I will show you. So there's two stories. Two narratives. And for the most part, we get to see the first come, I will show you Babylon chaos.

We see it all around us every single day, don't we? But we also need to see and anticipate final victory. That God is at work, even though sometimes it's difficult to see.

So the angel says, Come, I will show you the judgment of the great prostitute who is seated on many waters. Verse 15 is going to tell us what those waters actually represent.

They are peoples and multitudes and nations and languages. So not H<sub>2</sub>O. Jeremiah 51, which is where we've drawn a lot of this text from.

Jeremiah 50, Jeremiah 51. Jeremiah 51 says, Oh, you who dwell by many waters rich in treasures, your end has come. The thread of your life is cut.

[ 21 : 07 ] Same idea. Speaking about Babylon. So the angel says, The judgment of the great prostitute is seated on many waters. It has come with, verse 2, With whom the kings of the earth have committed sexual immorality, and with the wine of whose sexual immorality the dwellers on earth have become drunk.

And he carried me away in the spirit into the wilderness, which is Old Testament language for the realm of the dead. Why? Nothing ever grows in the wilderness. Nothing ever good happens in the wilderness or literally stays there, right?

So the place of the wilderness is always a place of temptation. It's always a place of testing. And it's always a place of death. So don't miss that, right?

So he carried me away into the spirit, into the wilderness. And I saw a woman sitting on a scarlet beast that was full of blasphemous names. And it has seven heads and ten horns.

Notice that the term blasphemous names is a reference to spiritual competitors. They're the names of gods. Because, like, what else would they be?

[ 22 : 17 ] The woman was arrayed in purple and scarlet and adorned with golden jewels and pearls, holding in her hand a golden cup full of abominations and impurities of her sexual immorality. And on her forehead was written a name of mystery.

Babylon the great, mother of prostitutes and the earth's abominations. So John is seeing this vivid picture of a woman who is literally dressed up for the town, described as a prostitute.

And in the Old Testament, sexual immorality is often used as a metaphor for idolatry. Right? Like the whole book of Hosea.

If you want to read the book of Hosea, go for it. It's a great book, but it deals with the issue of sexual morality and idolatry. The Old Testament prophets accused Nineveh of sexual morality, but it was idolatry.

Same with Tyre. All right? Same with actually Babylon in Jeremiah 23. So we're not talking about prostitution as we know prostitution.

[ 23 : 23 ] He's talking about spiritual unfaithfulness. And he's setting this, again, he's setting this picture of unfaithfulness versus faithfulness. The people who get caught up in the chaos system of Babylon versus the faithful to the Lamb.

And so what is going on here in this end time scenario is a final world empire, as we saw in Daniel. Daniel chapter 2, Daniel chapter 7.

Headed up by someone called the Antichrist. And all of the countries are aligning themselves to it. But in the background, the gods are aligning themselves against God and his people.

Because there's never a physical action without a spiritual reality behind it. With this background, it is beyond dispute that this woman is the epitome of spiritual idolatry.

She is leading the world in the pursuit of false religion. Now look, I don't know if you've ever read the book, The Woman Rides a Beast by Dave Hunt. Try and park that.

[ 24 : 30 ] I know that's a popular book. Try and park that. Hunt basically comes out and says that the woman is the Roman Catholic Church. There are some similarities. Just park it for now. That's for life group.

Now someone's going to go out and buy it and read it and now we're in trouble. So she is the symbol for a system that reaches back to the Tower of Babel in Genesis chapter 11.

And then extends future and it will peak under the regime of the Antichrist. So that's what we're looking at.

Just in the same way Babylon isn't probably a real place. This woman probably isn't a real place. But it's the summary. It's the typology of all that is true about idolatry.

John says, I saw the woman, verse 6, And she was drunk with the blood of the saints, The blood of the martyrs of Jesus. So evidently this has a lot to do with persecuting those who don't align themselves then to the same gods.

[ 25 : 40 ] And in this case, It's the faithful to Jesus. And so you can see how already this chapter is contrasting those faithful with those who are not. He says, Many reasons.

Like, right? I tell you the mystery of the woman and of the beast with seven heads and ten horns that carries her. And you're like, I wasn't marveling before that, But now I am.

Right? So what that means is that the angel is now going to tell us what this image means. And I like that. Like, I like it for the Bible to tell me what the Bible means.

Like, I don't have to rely on someone on YouTube. Right? And you don't have to rely on me to tell you. That takes the pressure off me. Because like, The Bible said, An angel is going to tell us.

Great. And he's going to do so using several details from chapter 11 and 13. So if you'd missed those, Please read back over those.

[ 26 : 45 ] But also he's going to give us some new information. So he says, Look, The beast, Verse 8, That you saw was, And is not, And is about to rise from the bottomless piece, The home of demons, And go to destruction.

And the dwellers on earth, Whose names have not been written in the book of life from the foundation of the world, Will marvel to see the beast, Because it was, And is not, And is to come. And everybody says, Thank you, Mr. Angel.

Now I know I can carry on with my life. Like, we're no clearer, are we? Right? So, We've noticed before, That in each of his appearances in the book, The beast is either an empire, Or the ruler of that empire.

Alright? So the idea that it was, And is not, And is about to rise, Not only recalls the kind of the mortal wound, That was healed in chapter 13, If you remember that, But points us to this Babylon idea yet again, As we see a recurring cycle, Of Babylon influence in the world.

So let me try and explain what I mean. And maybe the best way to explain what I mean, Is in form of a question. The issue is, Is this, Where did Nazi Germany get its power?

[ 27 : 59 ] As a question. Just, You don't have to answer out loud, Just think about that. Where did Nazi Germany get its power? Or, Where did, Where did the Soviet Union, Who killed 5 million Ukrainians in 1933, Where did they get their power?

Or, What was fueling the Khmer Rouge in Cambodia? The answer to that, Is that every now and again, Babylon seems to surface.

And what we're seeing in this chapter, Is what happens when Babylon, Not just surfaces, But rises again. Does that make sense? Does that make it clearer?

So we see Babylon, Coming and going, All the way through history. But what happens when Babylon, Rises again and stays? And that's what we're seeing in this chapter. That it takes over the world.

The angel says, That the world will marvel, Future tense. Chapter 13, Was in the past tense. The world marveled. This is in the future tense, The world will marvel.

[ 29 : 12 ] Now I don't know what that means, But I just thought I was interested. Verse 9, This calls, And it does, This calls for a mind with wisdom. Right? Check it out right now.

Tap out, tap out, right? This calls for a mind with wisdom. So this is designed then, To help us understand, What is happening. This is the same as in chapter 13, When the angel explained, The number of the beast, right?

And we were like, Oh yeah! And none of us actually said, Oh yeah! It's what he says, The seven horns, No, the seven heads, Are seven mountains, On which the woman is seated.

Good. There are also seven kings, Five of whom have fallen, One is, The other has not yet come. And when he does come, He must remain for a little while.

As for the beast that was, And is not, It is the eight, But it belongs to the seven, And it goes to destruction. Happy days. So, Look, Break it down.

[ 30 : 18 ] The heads, Are mountains, Which are also kings. Good. And then we get the description, Of those kings.

The first five, Have fallen, One is, And the other has not yet come. Verse 11 says, As for the beast, That was, That was, And is not, It is the eight, But it belongs to the seven, And it goes to destruction.

So look, Let me see if I can lay this out. Let me tell you what I don't, I think it doesn't mean. That's probably easier. Yeah. Those that tend to symbolize this text, As something completely different, Take this, Actually very literally, Which is a great irony, For me.

So, It's popular to take the seven kings, As the literal emperors of Rome. Right? How many people have heard that? You heard that before? Two people. Great. So, Julius Caesar, Caesar Augustus, Tiberius, Calicula, Claudius, Nero.

So, Five of those Roman emperors, That came before John, Had this vision. Five of those, Were executed, Or committed suicide. Right?

[ 31 : 29 ] So, Julius Caesar was assassinated, Augustus was poisoned, Tiberius was the only one, He wasn't, Calicula was stabbed, Claudius was smothered, And Nero stabbed himself, As you'd expect, From someone like Nero.

And then, Dominion was alive, At the time that John was writing. He was. And then, One to come. And we all go, Oh yeah, It must be the Roman emperors.

But the problem is, That view is completely arbitrary. And what I mean by arbitrary, We just made it up. And we all went, Oh, That sounds right. But it's actually just made up.

Because, Where do you start counting? Do you start counting with Caesar? Or do you start counting with Augustus? Are all the emperors counted? Or just the ones that emphasize, Emperor worship.

What about, Galba? I know. You're like, Who's Galba? He was an emperor who reigned, For about nine months, Just before Nero. Why don't we include him?

[ 32 : 30 ] Or, Or what about, Vitellius, Who also reigned for about nine months. About the same time. In fact, There was one year, Ironically, Was called, The year of four emperors.

Why do you think that was? They had four emperors in one year. But they don't work out, In that arbitrary way of going, Here's the five, Here's the one, Here's the one to come. Why? Because it doesn't fit our system.



It doesn't fit our theology, That we've come with. Why? Because we like it to fit, And be neat, And tidy. So a better way to see it, Is to see the seven heads, And mountains, As successive kings, Or successive empires.

And the reason that is a better view, Is because actually, That's the biblical view. Okay, That's not my view, I'm making up. Right? That is the biblical view.

That's the meaning of mountain, In the Bible. Now obviously, Sometimes it does mean, It's a mountain, Like a very big hill. Okay? But quite often, The Bible refers to mountains, As people, And rulers, Over nations.

[ 33 : 37 ] Right? So just, We probably don't have time, To pick this one apart. But Psalm 68, Just have a read of this, And you'll be, You'll be well served, If you read the whole chapter, Sometime this afternoon.

The psalmist says, Reign in abundance, O God, You shed abroad, You restored your inheritance, As it languished, Your flock found a dwelling in it, In your goodness, O God, You provided for the needy, The Lord gives the word, The women who announce the news, Are a great host, The kings of the armies, They flee, They flee.

The women at home, Divide the spoil, Though you men, Lie among the sheep, Sheep folds, The wings of a dove, Covered with silver, Its pinions, With shimmering gold, When the almighty, Scatters kings there, Notice this, When the almighty, Who's scattering kings?

The almighty, Is scattering kings. That's why we pray, For our king. Three times in the New Testament, It says, Submit to the king. Why? Because the almighty, Has scattered the kings.

Anyway, When the almighty, Scatters kings there, Let snow fall on Zalman, The mountain of God, The mountain of Bashan, The many peak mountain, Mountains of Bashan, Why do you look with hatred?

[ 34 : 53 ] He's not talking to the mountain, Is he? Okay, Maybe you don't know. He's not talking to the mountain. Right? He's talking about those rulers, Who go against God, And his plans.

That's the context of that chapter. Isaiah chapter 2, Verse 2, It shall come to pass, In the latter days, When the mountain, Of the house of the Lord, Shall be established, As the highest, Of the mountains.

He's not talking about, Everest, Versus the mountain of God. Right? Again, It's not a physical mountain, But the rulers over nations, Possibly even, These demonic rulers, That we've talked about before.

Jeremiah 51, Again, Relevant to, Revelation 17, Behold, I am against you, O destroying mountain, Declares the Lord, Which destroys the whole earth.

I will stretch out my hand, Against you. This is, This is Babylon language, Isn't it? Right? I will stretch out my hand, Against you. You roll down from the crags, And make you, A burnt mountain.

[ 36 : 01 ] So probably more relevant, To Revelation 17, Than we're probably aware of. So the point is that, There is a double identification, With kings and nations. The seven kings, Represent the seven, Literal, Kingdoms, That follow one another, In succession, According to Daniel 7.

But the term kings, And kingdoms, Are interchangeable. Showing that a king, Can stand for the kingdom, Ruled by that king. And what you're seeing, In this text, Is that, Is that, Through those kingdoms, Come a, Babylon, Chaos system, That surfaces, In the last days, Led by, One more king, Known as the beast, Or the antichrist, The one who is yet to come.

And the ten horns, He says, Verse 12, The ten horns that you saw, Are the ten kings, Who have not yet received, Royal power, But they are to receive, Authority as kings, For one hour, Together with the beast.

So the seven king, The seven heads, Are kingdoms, Represented by kings, But the seven, The ten horns, Are kings, Without kingdoms, At the time that John is writing. They receive their authority, As kings, For one hour, One hour, Sixty minutes, Or just a time period.

Probably just a time period, Right? It is a set period of time. And so again, We're reminded that even during the time, Of unprecedented chaos, God is sovereign.

[ 37 : 27 ] God says, It's going to last this long, But it's not going to last any longer. He has the authority, To give control, And take it away. He sets the boundaries, For that, Their power.

He says these, Verse 13, These are of one mind. Notice this. These are of one mind, And they hand over their power, And authority to the beast. They will make war on the lamb, And the lamb will conquer them, For he is the lord of lords, And king of kings.

And those with him, Are called, And chosen, And faithful. So again, Setting up this contrast, Right? Between unfaithful, And faithful. About being stayed with God.

Now notice that, In verse 13, It says that they were of one mind, And how incredibly challenged, That is for us. And how incredibly different, That is, From the church.

And this should, This should come to us, As a slight rebuke. When the world is more united, Than the church, There's a problem. Sometimes I find, That the world actually, Behaves more like the church, And the church behaves, More like the world.

[ 38 : 38 ] We're seeing a kingdom, Divided against itself, But in Christ, We are united, As one body. And we should cultivate, Love and forgiveness, And reconciliation, Among ourselves.

And we should do away, With factions, And trying to get, One up on each other. The angel says there, In verse 15, The angel said to me, The waters that you saw, Where the prostitute is seated, Are peoples and multitudes, And nations and languages, And the ten horns that you saw, They are the beast, Oh, They and the beast, Will hate the prostitute.

So now look, We had a turn. Right? So we've had a turn, In simply describing, How the chaos system, Will come to an end. And, He's really saying, Look, The kingdom, Dividing against itself, Won't be able to stand.

They will make her, They will make her desolate, And naked, Devour her flesh, Burn up her, Burn her with fire. Verse 17, For God has put it in their hearts, Notice that, God has put it in their hearts, To carry out this purpose, Of being of one mind, And handing over, Their royal power to the beast, Until the word of God, Is fulfilled.

And the woman that you saw, Is the great city, That has dominion, Over the kings of the earth. And so again, Look, This is really, The issue of a kingdom, Dividing against itself.

[ 39 : 58 ] Jesus said, In Mark chapter 6, If a kingdom is divided, Against itself, That kingdom can't stand. And if a house, Is divided against itself, That house will not, Be able to stand.

And if Satan, Has risen up against himself, And is divided, He cannot stand. But he is coming to an end. And that's exactly, What we're seeing in this chapter. Now hold that thought, As we move into chapter 18, Which we're going to finish with, And we're barely, Just going to read it, Because, It says that God, Has put it in their hearts, To carry out his purpose.

God has put it in their hearts, To carry out, His purpose. The sovereign, Purpose of God, Is behind this, Internal strife, Within the kingdom of evil.

And whilst we, We can say that, The immediate cause, Of this division, Is probably unknown. The ultimate cause is known. God has put it in their hearts, That's what the text says. I find this, This verse, Incredible.

Daniel chapter 4, Verse 17. We talked a little bit about this, A few months back, But, The sentence, We read that, The sentence is by the decree, Of the watchers.

[ 41 : 17 ] It's the sons of God, The angelic council. The sentence is by the decree, Of the watchers, The decision, By the word of the holy ones. To the end, That the living may know, That the holy, The most holy, Rules the kingdom of men, And gives it to whom he will, And sets it over the lowliest of men.

Like, That's what's happening. Though the world's systems crumble, God is behind it. The triumph of Christ, Remains unshakable.

And the good news, Is that Jesus is the king, And he's come to save us. And this reminds us, That even in the midst of chaos, Whatever that looks like, For you today, God is sovereignly, Working his purposes out.

And let me tell you, What that usually looks like. Because I think sometimes, We get caught up, In thinking, The way Babylon thinks, And thinking, Well I've got hardships, And so God, You need to take me out, Of the hardship.

That's Babylon thinking. That's worldly thinking. Take the hardship from me. What it usually looks like, Is not rescue from, A situation, As it is in our text.

[ 42 : 37 ] It sometimes is. But it's not usually that. It's not, Rescue from the situation, But transformation, Through the situation. God is much more concerned, With our holiness, Than he is our happiness.

And God's sovereign purposes, Are clear, In the New Testament. Paul said, To the church of Philippi, He said, For it is God, Who works in you, Both to will, And to work, For his good pleasure.

It's God's good pleasure, To work in us. And he will use, The situations of life, The trials of life, The fragility of life, The chaos of life, To work out, His good pleasure in us.

Romans chapter 8, Tells us what that good pleasure is. Whom he foreknew, He also predestined for what? To be conformed, To the image of his son. That's his good purpose. And you don't, You don't find God's good purpose, Every time when we run into the sun, And we avoid the rain.

It's just not true. We don't, We don't, We don't, Mature, Do we? If we're always avoiding, Difficulty and hardship.

[ 43 : 54 ] Jesus said this, He says, Fear not, Little flock, For it is your father's good pleasure To give you the kingdom. And so, We shouldn't, Despise trials, And hardships.

Because God's working in them. He's transforming us, Into the image of his son, Through them. And then, Chapter 8, To finish, I know that normally means nothing, But we will finish.

After this, I saw another angel coming from heaven, Having great authority in the earth. And the earth was made bright with his glory, And he called out with a mighty voice, Fallen, Fallen is Babylon, The great.

We've seen that a couple of times before, Revelation 14, Verse 8, Another angel, Second followed, Saying, Fallen, Fallen is Babylon, All right, So we've seen that before. Isaiah 21, Behold, Here comes riders, Horsemen and pairs, And he answered, Fallen, Fallen is Babylon.

And all the carved images of the gods, He is shattered to the ground. So, This is, Or those two verses are, Or are prophesying, What we're going to read now, In this chapter.

[ 45 : 11 ] So we've seen all of this, Already take place, If you like. Um, She, Verse 2, Has become a dwelling place for demons, A haunt of every unclean spirit, A haunt for every unclean bird, A haunt for every unclean and detestable beast.

And again, I think this is, Um, A description of just everything that is anti-God, That's going to surface in the last days. It's the description of what allegiance to the world, Eventually looks like.

Like if, If, If we could tell the world its future, And we can, This is what it looks like. And then in verse 3 to 9, He gives a description of pretty much again, What we've seen before.

Verse 3, All nations have drunk the wine of her passion, Of her sexual immorality, And the kings of the earth have committed immorality with her. And the merchants of the sea have grown rich, From, From the power of her luxurious living.

So again, Same thing described about the woman, Is now being described about Babylon. Then I heard another voice from heaven saying, Come out of her, My people, Lest you take part in her sins, Lest you share in her plagues, For her sins are heaped high as heaven, And God has remembered her iniquities.

[ 46 : 28 ] Pay her back, As she herself has paid back others, And repay for, Repay her double for her deeds, Mix a double portion for her in the cup she mixed.

As she glorified herself, And lived in luxury, So give her a like measure of torment and mourning. Since in her heart, She says, I sit as the queen, I am no widow, And mourning I shall never see.

For this reason, Her plagues will come in a single day, Death and mourning and famine, And she will be burned up with fire, For mighty is the Lord God, Who has judged her. And so, Right in the midst of all this, Right in the midst of all this judgment, God is calling his own people out, So that they might avoid it.

And it's a call, To not only leave the city literally, But it's of course a call to all, Who read this, To shun the allurements of the Babylon promises.

Right? To leave the enticements of idolatry, To leave behind self-sufficiency, To leave behind our reliance on luxury, To abandon violence against human life, To be a people who not only follow Jesus in word, But also in deed and devotion, To stand firm in the face of temptation.

[ 47 : 56 ] And look, I think this not only includes the sins that we often recognize, But you know, The whole Babylon system includes the pressures of rising through the corporate ladder, Meeting those deadlines that were yesterday, The pressure of those, Striving for success, So we can gain other people's approval, Rather than God's.

All of these, What you might call those acceptable sins. This is not a call to abandon our jobs, Or neglect our responsibilities, But rather to remind us, To prioritize our faith, And our values, In every decision that we make.

In the workplace, We can be a shining light, Embodying hope, And integrity, And kindness, And humility. Verse 9 says, Pearls, Fine linen, Purple cloth, Silk, Scarlet cloth, All kinds of scented wood, All kinds of articles of art, You get it, It's like eBay, Right?

Verse 14, The fruit for which your soul longed, Has gone from you, And all your delicacies, And your splendors, Are lost to you, Never to be found again, And the merchants of these words, Who gained wealth from her, Will stand far off, In fear of her torment, Weeping and mourning aloud, Alas, Alas, For the great city, That was clothed in fine linen, And purple and scarlet, Adorned with gold, And jewels with pearls, In a single hour, Verse 17, All this wealth has been laid aside, All the shipmasters, And the seafaring men, It's like no one's left out, Right?

All the shipmasters, The seafaring men, Sailors, And all those who trade on the sea, Stood far off, Cried out, Cried out as they saw the smoke of her burning, What city was like this great city?

[ 50 : 13 ] And they threw dust on their heads, As they wept and mourned, Crying out, Alas, Alas, For the great city, Where all who had ships at sea, Grew rich by her wealth, For in a single hour, She has been laid waste.

And then in verse 20, We see a call for God's people to react differently, And to embrace the identity of the redeemed. Our true worth is not found in our job titles or salaries, But in the fact that we are children of the Most High, And aligning our work and family life with godly priorities.

And this is what we're called to hear. Verse 20, Rejoice over her, O heavens. See the difference? Here's the reaction of the unfaithful. Alas, Alas, This great city in one single hour.

Here's the cry, The challenge for the faithful. Rejoice. Rejoice over her, O heavens. And you saints, And apostles, And prophets, For God has given judgment, For you against her.

Then a mighty angel took up a stone like a great millstone, Threw it into the sea, Saying, So will Babylon, The great city, Be thrown down with violence, And will be found no more.

[ 51 : 24 ] And the sound of the harpists, And musicians, And flute players, And like, I don't know what they've got against flute players and trumpeters, But there you go, Will be heard in you no more. And a craftsman of any craft will be found in you no more.

And the sound of the mill will be heard in you no more. And the light of the lamp will shine in you no more. And the voice of the bridegroom and the bride will be heard in you no more. For your servants were the great ones of the earth, And all nations were deceived by your sorcery.

And in her was found the blood and prophets of the saints, And all of those who have been slain on the earth. And so amid the chaos, The good news shines through. Where everything that is not true, About Babylon, Is true about the new Jerusalem.

There will be cries of joy. There will be celebration. There will be the sound of flutes and trumpets, And saxophones, hopefully. And pianos.

And drums. And guitars. Look, the allure of Babylon is something we all experience today, isn't it? It was the struggle of remaining faithful to God.

[ 52 : 35 ] The challenge and the yearning for deliverance from its clutches. The good news is that it is removed once and for all in the triumph of the Lamb who is Jesus. So let's look to Him.

Father, thank you for your word. Lord, we want to confess there are some challenging things here. But Lord, we want to ask you to help us not to necessarily understand every word, Every full stop and every comma.

Lord, but help us to live, Lord, like we're faithful. Help us to be faithful to you. Lord, we thank you, Lord, that we are currently not living in the time that this is speaking about.

Lord, but our times are challenging enough. Lord, and each of us feel that temptation, Lord, to slip into more worldliness And to be materialistic or consumeristic, Lord, in our attitudes.

Lord, we pray. Save us from that. Lord, we pray, Lord, that we would make you our treasure. Lord, we pray, Lord, that our eyes would be fixed on you, Lord. We pray, Lord, that we would identify with the people of the redeemed And may be able to rejoice in righteousness and faithfulness.

[ 53 : 49 ] Help us in these things, we pray. In Jesus' name. Amen.