

It is my great joy to minister the Word of God to you this morning. Once again will you take your Bibles and turn to Revelation chapter 18. Over the course of many months we have not arrived to chapter 18 and this morning we will focus on the first three verses. Let me read them to you. Revelation 18.

After these things I saw another angel coming down from heaven, having great authority, and the earth was illumined with his glory. And he cried out with a mighty voice, saying, "Fallen, fallen is Babylon the great! And she has become a dwelling place of demons and a prison of every unclean spirit, and a prison of every unclean and hateful bird. For all the nations have drunk of the wine of the passion of her immorality, and the kings of the earth have committed acts of immorality with her, and the merchants of the earth have become rich by the wealth of her sensuality."<sup>1</sup>

We approach the Word of God again this Lord's Day morning with a sense of deep reverence and anticipation. We come, once again, to examine the APOKALUPSIS IESOU CHRISTOU. The apocalypse is the uncovering, the unveiling, a revelation of divine truth that was once hidden. And here we find, once again, the Lord Jesus Christ disclosing to us the amazing chronology of events that will define the final days of man's rebellion upon the earth and his glorious return as King of kings and Lord of lords.

May I remind you that in the Lord's revelation in verse 19 of chapter one the Lord himself outlines this book? He first speaks of, "The things which you have seen,"<sup>2</sup> a reference to a vision of the glorified Christ in chapter one. And then he wants the apostle John to record, secondly, "The things which are."<sup>3</sup> And in chapters two and three we read of letters to the seven prominent churches of that day that are representative of churches down through Church history. And then, thirdly, "The things which shall take place after these things."<sup>4</sup> After the Church has been translated into heaven at the rapture in chapters four through the rest of the book we read of the seal and the trumpet and the bowl judgments. We read of the details of the rise and the fall of the coming antichrist and his global empire, the rise and the fall of the false prophet and the harlot church that he will lead. We read of the protection and redemption of Israel, the Second Coming of the Lord Jesus Christ, the millennial kingdom and the eternal state.

And as we piece all of these prophesies together in the Word of God, not just in the book of Revelation, but throughout, we get a much bigger picture of that which will one day transpire. Let me give you that picture yet again so that you understand the overall flow of the prophetic Word.

After the Church has been translated into heaven I believe that chaos will ensue around the world especially in the United States of America. This country will be instantly crippled. This will be the perfect time for the Russian Arab alliance that the Lord

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<sup>1</sup> Revelation 18:1-3.

<sup>2</sup> Revelation 1:19.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid.

prophesies through Ezekiel in chapter Ezekiel 38 and 39, the battle of Gog and Magog where this alliance will come down on Israel and will be defeated.

At that time the world will recognize the power of the God of Israel. And the Jews will finally be able to rebuild their temple on the temple mount in place of the Islamic dome of the rock, that piece of ground that is the most disputed parcel in all the world. And during this time a diabolical leader will arise, the Bible calls the antichrist. And he will offer a false peace to the world to bring order out of the chaos that has just occurred because of the rapture and as a result of the defeat of the massive Red army and the Islamic forces. He will, on behalf of a European confederacy, sign a covenant or a peace treaty with Israel who will at that time enjoy enormous clout in the world. And during the first half of what is called the tribulation—the tribulation being triggered by that covenant that the antichrist signs—the world will experience the beginning of God’s judgments, the seal judgments and the trumpet judgments will rain down upon the earth and bring about catastrophic destruction and death.

Yet during this season of judgment the antichrist will offer the world a spiritual explanation for all of the things that are happening as to why the God of Israel is doing these things. And they will know that it is Him yet they will follow the antichrist who is called the beast and they will blaspheme the triune God and worship the antichrist instead.

And also during this time Satan and his demons—who by now will be confined to the earth—will assist the antichrist in creating a hugely successful empire that the Lord calls Babylon the Great where commerce will flourish and create enormous wealth around the world. We must understand that Satan understands man’s sinful nature and his utter addiction to materialism. So he will supply him with the opiate of wealth. Every politician knows that if you can create wealth for the masses they will follow him anywhere. The key to a man’s vote is his pocketbook. You see, man lives for this life, not for the next. Man lives for himself, not for God. Satan understands this. In fact, a politician’s character and policies may be as vile as Lucifer himself, but if he can make people wealthy or at least make them think that he can, they will turn their head away from his character and worship him as though he were God.

During the first half of the tribulation this political, commercial and even military empire of the antichrist will coexist with the false prophet who will head up a false religious system, what Revelation 17:5 calls “a mystery, Babylon the great, the mother of all harlots.” And, of course, that is a fitting description given the fact that they were all spawned at Babel as we have studied in great detail in our study of chapter 17. The false prophet will use his alleged miracle working abilities to deceive the world into worshipping the antichrist and wearing the mark that he will require on their bodies, and the antichrist will initially use this system to both unify as well as control the nations of the world so that he can advance his political agenda.

While many people will be saved during that time because of the testimony of the 144,000, because of the two witnesses, the angelic preachers and many saints who will come to Christ during that time, both Jew and Gentile, many will be martyred.

Towards the end of the first half of the tribulation the antichrist will fake his death and resurrection and desecrate the Jewish temple in Jerusalem. And at that point he will establish himself as God and demand that the world worship him. At that point also he and other nations that are part of his confederacy will turn against the harlot church. It will be destroyed. And during this second half of the tribulation towards the end, right before the Lord returns, we read how God will pour out seven final judgments, seven bowl judgments to plague the beast worshippers and wreak havoc on the ecosystems of the world causing men to blaspheme God.

In Revelation 17 that we have just finished studying in weeks past, during these final days of human suffering, the antichrist will actually expand his empire to include 10 other regions with their own rulers, administrators who will serve under him. And, of course, their ultimate goal will be to eradicate all of the Jews and all of the Christians who are worshipping Christ, all Gentile believers as well and wage war against the Lamb at the battle of Armageddon where they will be slaughtered. Keep in mind that Satan's consuming passion this very day is to prevent the coming Messiah king from fulfilling his promises to his covenant people Israel and establishing his glorious kingdom upon the earth.

Now, remember, as well, that in chapter 17 the Lord gives a description of the character and the judgment that will fall upon the spiritual religious facet of this kingdom that will be led by the false prophet, the one world religion. And now we come to chapter 18 where he gives us a description of the character and the judgment of the political commercial component of this coming kingdom led by the antichrist that will include a one world economy. These events in chapter 18 will occur just before the seventh bowl judgment. The six prior bowls will encompass the last few weeks and even days and hours and then the final fall of Babylon will culminate in the seventh bowl which will lead to the killing fields of Armageddon in the final hours just before the Lord returns.

May I remind you of those bowl judgments in chapter 16? There will be loathsome and malignant sores upon all who worship the beast. The second bowl will be the oceans turning into blood like that of a dead man and every living thing in the sea will die. The third bowl will befall the fresh waters of the world with the same fate where they will become toxic. The fourth bowl will include men being scorched with fierce heat from the sun that, in many ways, I see as a divine parody on the great hoax of global warming that has been foisted upon our world today. The fifth bowl will be the darkening of the luminaries in the heavens. The world will become dark. And then the sixth bowl will be the great river Euphrates and its water will dry up and that will prepare the way for the kings from the east the Word of God tells us.

Even as God parted the Red Sea with the dry land and thereby lured the Egyptian charioteers into a watery tomb some 3,456 years ago, so, too, again the Lord will lay

another trap for the enemies of Israel by drying up the river Euphrates. They will come into the land of Israel and be destroyed. And, dear friends, at this point Babylon the great will fall as we read here in chapter 18. The long awaited climax of divine wrath will be poured out in the seventh bowl which will include a devastating earthquake accompanied by massive 100 pound hail stones that will devastate the earth.

Now, I have divided chapter 18 into five sections to help us understand the nature of this final world empire and God's judgment upon it. The first section will be the one we will look at this morning. We will see, first of all, its doom; secondly, its danger; thirdly its deeds; fourthly, its dirge; and, finally, its destruction.

So here in the first three verses we have this angelic messenger describing the final collapse of commercial Babylon, a system that has intoxicated the kings and the merchants and the people of the earth, with its commerce, with its materialism. And obviously this will require a one world government. Most likely this will include a one world economy, probably a one world bank and a one world currency. We don't know these things for sure, but we know there will be a one world government with a one world ruler. I find it interesting as I meditate on these things, 50 years ago all of this would have seemed impossible. Today it seems inevitable.

According to the *Washington Times*, quote, "China is pushing for a single world currency because it no longer trusts the United States to restrain itself from printing too much cash and debasing the dollar." It goes on to say, "The Obama administration supports dramatically greater centralization on a national and international scale," end quote.

Fears of the world moving towards a one world government continue to mount, especially of late with the radical policies of the authorities that God has placed over us. We are beginning to fear more and more the very real possibility that our country might go bankrupt. We are fearing a global banking system and we are seeing how that we are being pushed towards a centralized world government.

There are many examples that I could give you to affirm these facts, but one which is currently causing enormous concern that I spoke on before is this global warming hoax that has now spawned the cap and trade legislation that perhaps you have read about that Congress is trying to pass. According to the *Wall Street Journal*, quote, "Under a cap and trade system government sets a cap on the total amount of carbon that can be emitted nationally. Companies then buy or sell permits to emit CO<sub>2</sub>. The cap gets cranked down over time to reduce total carbon emissions. The corporate cost of buying these expensive permits will be passed to consumers."

The journal goes on to say, "The whole point of cap and trade is to hike the price of electricity and gas so that Americans will use less. These higher prices will show up not just in electricity bills or at the gas station, but in every manufactured good from food to cars. Consumers will cut back on spending which, in turn, will cut back on production which result in fewer jobs created or higher unemployment and some companies will instead move their operations overseas with the same result," end quote.

The implications of these things, dear friends, are staggering. And I want to give you just a little bit of an example so that you see how very real and how very probable it is that we will move towards a one world system.

Perhaps you have heard of the Copenhagen climate treaty. If you haven't, you need to read up on it. You won't hear much about it on the news. According to this treaty they audaciously state, quote, "Industrialized countries have a dual obligation under the treaty representing their overall responsibility for keeping the world within the limits of the global carbon budget and ensuring that adaptation to the impacts of climate change is possible for the most vulnerable. This dual binding obligation takes the form of emissions reductions as well as the provision of support to developing countries," end quote.

And, as you study it they have two stated goals. Number one, the transfer of wealth from industrial nations to developing countries which translates into global socialism where the United States helps these other developing countries and then, secondly, to dictate energy use and consumption to industrial nations. And, of course, that would be ruled by the United Nations and move us ever more toward a global dictatorship.

Lord Christopher Moncton the former advisor for science policy to the former British Prime Minister Lady Margaret Thatcher, believes that if the United States signs any climate treaty coming out of this Copenhagen Climate Change Conference in December, that it could subject the United States to a global dictatorship. In fact he warns—and I quote—"This treaty of Copenhagen which is going to be negotiated by the state's parties to the United Nations framework convention on climate change in December is going to establish for the first time in human history a global government," end quote.

Now, beloved, these things may not come to fruition, but my point is simply this. Our country and the world is now moving ever more rapidly towards globalism. We don't know when it will happen. We are not sure how it will happen. But I can tell you on the basis of Scripture that it will happen.

And my purpose in sharing these current events is not some... to advance some political agenda. We are citizens of another kingdom. What happens politically is really of very little concern to me. But my agenda is a gospel agenda. My friends, keep in mind that as we look at these things we see the shadows of Bible prophecy casting themselves forward. Jesus is coming again and it could be very soon and, therefore, as Christians our priority must be to proclaim the gospel of Christ to a lost and dying world while there is still time.

Now, let's examine more closely the inspired record concerning the fall of Babylon the Great, this coming global empire. The first three verses of chapter 18 give us insight into, first of all, its doom. And that is what we will examine this morning.

Verse one we read, “After these things.”<sup>5</sup> In other words, after the vision of divine judgment that John has just seen regarding the harlot church in chapter 17, though the harlot church and the headquarters of the antichrist will share the same geographic headquarters, “Babylon the great,” now we see that there is an emphasis on something very different, on a different aspect of “Babylon the great.” We are going to see in verse three it has to do with the power of her luxury, in verse seven her attitude of arrogance, in verses three, 11, 15 and 23 her concentrated commerce with the kings and the merchants of the earth and in verse 17 those who make their living by the sea.

So the focus here is on the collapse of the economic prosperity and arrogant luxury of commercial Babylon. Chapter 17 had to do with the religious system. Chapter 18 has to do with the economic system.

So he says, “After these things I saw another angel coming down from heaven, having great authority, and the earth was illumined with his glory.”<sup>6</sup> “Another” here in the original language is **ALLOS** (al’-los), another of the same kind. It is not **HETEROS** (het’-er-os), another of a different kind. So this is not referring to Christ, but another angelic messenger like the one in chapter 17.

Notice the angel coming down from heaven has “great authority.” Naturally he does. He is a messenger of God. And he now pierces the darkness that envelops the world as a result of the fifth bowl judgment and we read that, “The earth was illumined with his glory.”<sup>7</sup> Beloved, this is reminiscent of the account of Moses, you will recall, whose countenance continued to radiate the shekinah glory of God, the resplendent light of divine glory even after he had come down off of the mount as we read in Exodus 34.

And, likewise, here now the glory of God continues to blaze with a holy brilliance as it is reflected off of the angel. In fact, the text tells us, “And the earth was illumined with his glory.”<sup>8</sup> The word “illumined” in the original language is **PHOTIZO** (fo-tid’-zo) and it means “to light up.” That is what is going to happen. In fact, this is the same term that is used to describe the illuminating glory of the divine presence that will one day light up the New Jerusalem. It will light it up to a point where there will be no more need for the sun or the moon. In fact, according to Revelation 22 verse five it will be, “Because the Lord God shall illumine them.”<sup>9</sup>

Now, imagine the context here. Imagine the scene. This angel suddenly appears in the darkness illuminating the sky and giving this warning to the earth. The world is worshipping the antichrist and all of the policies that he has caused to come about to feed the insatiable appetite that man has for material things. And now suddenly they have been reeling from these bowl judgments that have fallen upon them, the loathsome and malignant sores, the oceans and the fresh water turned into toxic pools, the sun and the

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<sup>5</sup> Revelation 18:1.

<sup>6</sup> Revelation 18:1.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid.

<sup>9</sup> Revelation 22:5.

heat scorching them. And now the world is utterly dark because of the fifth bowl when this angel appears.

And, worse yet, we learn that this capital city of the antichrist will be infested with demons according to verse two. This will include the 200 million demons that we have read about in chapter nine and verse 13 and following, those demons that were released at the river Euphrates. This will also include the demons that have been released from the abyss, remember, at the sounding of the fifth trumpet as well as the demons that were cast down from heaven and are now confined to the earth according to Revelation 12. Then suddenly with all of this infestation and all of this horror going on, this magnificent angel appears and illuminates the sky with the glory of God from whose presence he has just come. No one will be able to miss him. No one will be able to ignore him.

And in verse two we read that, “He cried out with a mighty voice.”<sup>10</sup> Beloved, the language here underscores the supernatural strength of the angel’s voice and the impossibility of anyone missing what he says. The sound of his voice will be deafening. And then we read his proclamation of doom in verse two.

“Fallen, fallen is Babylon the great!”<sup>11</sup> The grammar here is very important. Once again we have the proleptic—or sometimes called the prophetic aorist. That is what is used. And this is always used to express a future event in the past tense to underscore the certainty of what is predicted. It is as though it has already happened. This great center of religious idolatry, this great center of economic prosperity is about to fall forever. To be sure, the angelic pronouncement will be utterly horrifying to the beast worshipers on the earth. And by using the name Babylon the great they will be compared to ancient Babylon, forcing them to deal with the biblical record.

Don’t you know when they hear this they will wonder, “Babylon the great?” “Why is he saying that?” No doubt many of them will learn that they are being compared to the wicked forces of ancient Babylon. It is interesting that Isaiah and Jeremiah both pronounced judgment upon ancient Babylon. And, indeed, it fell in 539 BC. But the ultimate completion of the prophecies regarding ancient Babylon awaited a future day, the one of which we read here, that day just before the Lord’s return at the end of man’s long rebellion on earth. And this will be a fact that they will discover in abject horror.

Verse two goes on. The angel says that, “She has become a dwelling place of demons and a prison of every unclean spirit, and a prison of every unclean and hateful bird.”<sup>12</sup> You see, this judgment will be the last judgment of Babylon that was first prophesied all the way back in Isaiah in chapter 21 and verse nine. In fact, the same language is used there. He speaks of the unclean spirit here in verse two. That is another name for a demon. And notice also we read, “A prison of every unclean and hateful bird.”<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> Revelation 18:2.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid.

You see, these demons are analogous to birds of prey hovering over their victims, about to attack with the further implication that they are incarcerated in this place, kept against their will, a place of utter desolation. This phrase was a symbol used by the Old Testament prophets Isaiah, Jeremiah and even Zephaniah to speak of the desolation of Babylon and even of ancient Nineveh. And it is interesting that Isaiah and Jeremiah mentioned actual birds as well as carnivores to describe the vile nature of the desolation and to symbolize the demons that would inhabit those regions.

They referred to the pelican, the hawk, the ostrich, the owl, the raven together with other unclean animals like the jackal, the hyena, “satyrs” which were also shaggy goats. In fact, in Zechariah five the prophet used the stork, another unclean bird, to symbolize the demonic forces that will one day both facilitate as well as protect this idolatrous, materialistic system energized by Satan and ruled by the antichrist, that system that will dominate the world, “Babylon the great.”

So here in verse two we discover that Satan and his minions, these demonic agents of evil, are symbolized as unclean and hateful birds. And as we study the text we learn that they will have an enormous role to play in this final world system because they will use the system to intoxicate beast worshipers, to intoxicate unbelievers with the wine of materialism.

The city, this headquarters of world commerce will be a place where Satan and demons are absolutely in charge. They are confined there. Now, this should be no surprise to us. Wherever God is not worshipped the blasphemous doctrines of demons will prevail, and idolatry will proliferate. Of course, this is a violation of the first two commandments. And a certain proof of idolatry will not only include the rejection of the gospel of Jesus Christ and the worship of some false God, in this case the worship of Satan through the antichrist, but it will also include sexual immorality and wanton materialism. And we see this in our culture today, do we not?

As we look around, our world is filled with every imaginable form of immorality. And to my amazement they continue to build more and more temples erected to the god of materialism, better known as shopping malls. And now you can even worship your material god at home through the internet, through catalogs. Isn't it interesting that our world always wants something bigger and better or, in some cases, smaller and faster. You very seldom hear anyone say, “Well, you know, I have got all I need. I am content with what I have.” That is not how it works.

As we read chapter 18 it also becomes obvious that the luxurious living and the amassing of wealth that the kings and merchants of the earth will one day enjoy along with the consumers of their goods and services, tells us that the future economic system will be that of free market capitalism. It is interesting. Communism and Socialism have proven to be colossal failures. Only Capitalism produces wealth. That is why the United States is the envy of the world. And I find it interesting to watch how quickly Europe and China and Russia and virtually every other country in the world (except some in the United States) are running from the economic quagmire of Socialism in favor of free market

Capitalism. And even the leftists that are currently in power in the United States are beginning to reap the tragic result of failed policies and they are watching the rise of this massive revolt against them because, as history has proven, the foundational principles of Liberalism that perpetuates the culture of entitlement and the redistribution of wealth and massive government control are not only counter intuitive, but they are doomed to fail.

As Margaret Thatcher once said, quote, “The problem with Socialism is that eventually you run out of other people’s money,” end quote. And that is what we are seeing.

Eventually, dear friends, as we study the Word of God we see that the antichrist will gain his following by offering the world not only peace, but prosperity. He will do so by offering solutions that will rescue the nations from their economic woes. So global Capitalism will eventually dominate the world and Satan will use this to appeal to man’s lust, the lust that man has for increasing wealth and material things, as well as to convince him of his own self-sufficiency.

I am reminded of the Lord’s encounter with the rich young ruler you will recall in Matthew 19. Remember this rich young man loved his possessions and himself more than God and his neighbors and this caused Jesus to warn in verse 24, “It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God.”<sup>14</sup>

So the angel announces their doom. “Fallen, fallen is Babylon the great!”<sup>15</sup> And the actual judgment that will befall this great city and make it desolate is recorded back in Revelation 16 verses 17 through 21 in the seventh bowl. You will recall we studied this a number of weeks back. Let me read it to you.

Then the seventh angel poured out his bowl upon the air, and a loud voice came out of the temple from the throne, saying, "It is done." And there were flashes of lightning and sounds and peals of thunder; and there was a great earthquake, such as there had not been since man came to be upon the earth, so great an earthquake was it, and so mighty. The great city was split into three parts...<sup>16</sup>

You might recall that is a reference to Jerusalem, consistent with the geophysical and topographical improvements that will occur in Jerusalem, predicted in Zechariah’s prophecy in Zechariah 14.

And then we read that, “The cities of the nations fell.”<sup>17</sup> In the Greek the word “fell” means they “fall to pieces.” They crumble to the ground. The idea in the original language is that these cities will collapse flat upon the ground.

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<sup>14</sup> Matthew 19:24.

<sup>15</sup> Revelation 18:2.

<sup>16</sup> Revelation 16:17-19.

<sup>17</sup> Revelation 16:19.

The prophecy goes on and says, “[And] Babylon the great was remembered before God, to give her the cup of the wine of His fierce wrath.”<sup>18</sup> In other words, the capital city of the antichrist’s great empire, this symbol of blasphemy and idolatry will be singled out as a special object of divine wrath.

Verse 20 of chapter 16 goes on and says that:

And every island fled away, and the mountains were not found. And huge hailstones, about one hundred pounds each, came down from heaven upon men; and men blasphemed God because of the plague of the hail, because its plague was extremely severe.<sup>19</sup>

Beloved, such will be the fate of “Babylon the great.”

And notice finally the reason that he gives in verse three. “For,” he says. Or it could be translated, “[Because] all the nations have drunk of the wine of the passion of her immorality.”<sup>20</sup> Now this phrase reaches back to chapter 17 and verse two where it is used to describe the seducing powers of the harlot church.

So here we learn that the cause of her doom will not only include her wanton luxury and materialism, that which this vile city has used to intoxicate the nations of the world, but also because of their religious involvement in that harlot church that will ultimately be destroyed and focus its attentions and affections on the antichrist alone.

So the people of the earth will place their faith in the antichrist and the imaginary inexhaustible resources that he offers them. They will assume that his empire possesses unlimited resources evidenced by the mark of the beast that they will wear.

Do we not already see this in our country where masses of people expect the government to care for them and politicians know how to buy their votes by spending unimaginable amounts of money as if there is an endless supply? Now we are experiencing, for example, unprecedented deficits in our country. In fact, since January I read just yesterday the national debt in America has quadrupled to around 12 trillion with no end in sight.

So in verse three the purpose of the judgment will be because, “All the nations have drunk of the wine of the passion of her immorality.”<sup>21</sup> And then it goes on to say, “And the kings of the earth have committed acts of immorality with her, and the merchants of the earth have become rich by the wealth of her sensuality.”<sup>22</sup> That could also be translated “because of the power of her wantonness.”

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<sup>18</sup> Ibid.

<sup>19</sup> Revelation 16:20-21.

<sup>20</sup> Revelation 18:3.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid.

<sup>22</sup> Ibid.

Power, **DYNAMEOUS** (doo'-nam-eh-os) in the original language. It is a term that could be translated power or wealth and it implies here that the vast wealth and luxury of Babylon will be the energizing force that will make the kings and the merchants fabulously wealthy.

In fact, the term “sensuality” which could also be translated “wantonness” describes the sheer insolence and arrogance and self-indulgence that will characterize the inhabitants of the city and of the people of the world. The people will not only be blasphemous idolaters, but they will also be utterly consumed with pride because of their wealth and their lavish lifestyles. And, historically, this has always characterized people who are fabulously wealthy, especially the political and religious elite.

So, dear friends, we have before us history waiting to be revealed, waiting to come to fruition. Amazing, a detailed account of where the world is heading, a world that is staggering around in a drunken stupor, a world that is like a man who is inebriated, only here it is inebriated with wealth and yet its appetite is never satisfied. It is always wanting yet another drink of something that will satisfy that insatiable lust for more.

Compare this with the attitude that God require according to James five and verse one where we read:

Come now, you rich, weep and howl for your miseries which are coming upon you. Your riches have rotted and your garments have become moth-eaten. Your gold and your silver have rusted; and their rust will be a witness against you and will consume your flesh like fire. It is in the last days that you have stored up your treasure! Behold, the pay of the laborers who mowed your fields, and which has been withheld by you, cries out against you; and the outcry of those who did the harvesting has reached the ears of the Lord of Sabaoth. You have lived luxuriously on the earth and led a life of wanton pleasure; you have fattened your hearts in a day of slaughter.<sup>23</sup>

Beloved, in closing this morning I wish to challenge you with these thoughts. It is easy for us even as Christians to yield to this temptation of wanting more, never being satisfied, never being content. The affluent culture in which we live pushes this upon us constantly. I often think how interesting it is that they change the models of the cars just a little bit every year so that you look at your car and you can say it just doesn't measure up to the new model and on and on it goes.

Very subtly we can allow our love for Christ to be eclipsed by a love for things, a sin that is so easily verified by just examining our spending habits, our stewardship, our patterns of giving even within the church. Very quickly we can see where we lay up our treasure. Is it on earth or is it in heaven?

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<sup>23</sup> James 5:1-5.

Paul warns in 1 Timothy six verse 10, “But those who want...”<sup>24</sup> which literally means eagerly desire. “But those who want to get rich fall into temptation and a snare and many foolish and harmful desires which plunge men into ruin and destruction.”<sup>25</sup> Let me pause there. Think of all the ways this can happen. All of the Ponzi schemes, all of the get rich quick schemes that are out there, gambling, playing the lottery, which is nothing more than a tax on the poor and the ignorant.

Paul goes on to say, “For the love of money is a root of all sorts of evil, and some by longing for it have wandered away from the faith, and pierced themselves with many a pang.”<sup>26</sup>

Well, dear friends, Satan will use man’s obsession for riches to lure him into worshipping the antichrist. And one day that whole wicked system will come crashing down. I challenge you this morning with another way, God’s way; for he pleads with us to lay up our treasures in heaven, not on earth.

You see, dear friends, our focus needs to be on our need for the forgiveness of sin. Our focus needs to be on being reconciled to a holy God. Our focus needs to be on the glorious gospel of Christ where we understand that we must trust in the Lord Jesus Christ as our only hope of salvation, the one who bled and died on a cross of Calvary as a substitute for our sins that we might have his righteousness as he took upon himself our sin.

For this reason the Lord said in Luke nine verse 23:

If anyone wishes to come after Me, he must deny himself, and take up his cross daily and follow Me. For whoever wishes to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake, he is the one who will save it. For what is a man profited if he gains the whole world, and loses or forfeits himself?<sup>27</sup>

Let’s pray together.

*Father, thank you for these truths that cause us to examine more closely our own hearts. Lord, I pray especially for those that do not know you, that today would be the day they confess their sin and come running to you as their Savior. Lord, I pray that you will use these truths to stir our hearts. I pray that you will use them to fan the embers of our affections of you into full flame. Lord, I pray that you will use what we have studied today to cause our hearts to glow red hot with an ardent zeal for evangelism. Lord, give us afresh the excitement of this certain hope that we have that you are coming again. Lord, encourage us to live in the light of your glory and your grace and, Lord, may we be found*

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<sup>24</sup> 1 Timothy 6:9.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid.

<sup>26</sup> 1 Timothy 6:10.

<sup>27</sup> Luke 9:23-25.

*watchful and faithful when you return. I pray this in the precious name of Jesus and for his sake. Amen.*

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**Transcript Explanation:** Each transcript is a rough approximation of the message preached and may occasionally misstate certain portions of the sermon and even misspell certain words. It should in no way be considered an edited document ready for print. Moreover, as in any transcription of the spoken word, the full intention and passion of the speaker cannot be fully captured and will in no way reflect the same style of a written document.

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