

As we continue our verse by verse study of this amazing disclosure of the Lord Jesus Christ this morning we will be examining verses four through eight. Follow along as I read keeping in mind the context here; the title of my discourse to you this morning, “The Fall of Babylon: The Coming Global Empire.”

Revelation 18 beginning in verse four.

And I heard another voice from heaven, saying, "Come out of her, my people, that you may not participate in her sins and that you may not receive of her plagues; for her sins have piled up as high as heaven, and God has remembered her iniquities. Pay her back even as she has paid, and give back to her double according to her deeds; in the cup which she has mixed, mix twice as much for her. To the degree that she glorified herself and lived sensuously, to the same degree give her torment and mourning; for she says in her heart, "I SIT AS A QUEEN AND I AM NOT A WIDOW, and will never see mourning." For this reason in one day her plagues will come, pestilence and mourning and famine, and she will be burned up with fire; for the Lord God who judges her is strong.¹

I am compelled this morning to remind you of some essential theological truths that hopefully will provide a better context for what we are about to examine this morning.

I never cease to marvel at how God has gone to such great lengths to reveal to us the events of the final days of history as well as the details of his Second Coming. But bear in mind that Scripture is God's revelation and he speaks much about revealing. It is interesting that in Romans the apostle Paul tells us in chapter eight, "I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory that is to be revealed to us,"² referring to the resurrection of our bodies and the subsequent glory of being like Christ. And then he goes on to say, "For the anxious longing of the creation waits eagerly for the revealing of the sons of God."³ The word "revealing" there, *apokalupsis* is the same word as the word revelation that we are studying. And there he speaks of the revelation of the sons of God. Beloved, there is going to be an unveiling one day. There is going to be an uncovering. When Christ returns we shall share in his glory.

So Paul tells us that there is going to be a revealing *to* and a revealing *of*. He is going to reveal to us a glorified resurrected body and then he is going to reveal *us*, the sons of God, when he returns. In fact, the apostle Paul tells us in Colossians chapter three and verse two that we are to set our minds on things above, not on the things that are of the earth. And then he goes on to say part of the reason why; "When Christ, who is our life,

¹ Revelation 18:4-8.

² Romans 8:18.

³ Romans 8:19.

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is revealed...”⁴ There it is again, unveiled, disclosed. “Then you also will be revealed with Him in glory.”⁵

Although all of creation is groaning under the curse—back to Romans eight and verse 23—the apostle Paul tells us even we, referring to the saints, even we are waiting eagerly. We are groaning and we are waiting eagerly for our adoption as sons, the redemption of our body.

You might think of it this way. Our adoption is somewhat of a process that first began when God chose us to be his child at salvation and we were adopted into his family. But it will finally come to completion in our resurrected glorified state, that time when we are finally and fully conformed to the image of Christ and we realize the fullness of our inheritance.

Beloved, our Lord’s revelation that we have before us here this morning details the events that are going to occur just prior to these staggering realities. That is why they are so exciting. And how fitting that John the apostle would receive this divine disclosure in the sunset of his life on the Isle of Patmos. You might recall that earlier John wrote this in 1 John three and verses one and two. He says, “See how great a love the Father has...”⁶ See how “great,” literally, astonishing, totally foreign to us. “we would be called children of God; and such we are. For this reason the world does not know us, because it did not know Him.”⁷

But he goes on to say something so powerful. He says, “Beloved, now we are children of God, and it has not appeared as yet what we will be.”⁸ In other words, now every believer possesses the divine life within him, but something more must happen. The Holy Spirit is not finished with us. There is a tension that currently exists and every believer feels this. There is something that hasn’t come to completion yet. As we live in this world we experience that. Somehow we are just not designed for all of this. We don’t function well in this world that has been cursed.

So he says, “We know that when He appears, we will be like Him, because we will see Him just as He is.”⁹ Beloved, that is when the tension will be resolved. We await our conformity. When he appears he will finally and fully be conformed into his image, into his nature. Now we have no idea what all that will include. The Bible just simply doesn’t tell us. But to whatever degree God has planned for us to be like the incarnate, resurrected Christ, we will be glorified, not deified, but glorified.

It is amazing. It is astounding. Our resurrected body will be completely reoutfitted. We see all this stuff on television about makeovers. I mean, beloved, this is the ultimate

⁴ Colossians 3:4.

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ 1 John 3:1

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ 1 John 3:2.

⁹ Ibid.

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makeover. We will be redesigned. We will be adapted to function in ways that transcend the very laws of physics that God has created. In fact, Paul says in Philippians 3:20:

We eagerly wait for a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ who will [catch this] transform the body of our humble state into conformity with the body of His glory, by the exertion of the power that He has even to subject all things to Himself.”¹⁰

What an amazing thought.

Now, you say, “Well, pastor, this is glorious beyond words, but what on earth does this have to do with Revelation 18?” I’m glad you asked. You see, the judgments of Revelation 18 are going to fall upon a vile, materialistic God hating, Christ hating world empire that is ruled by the antichrist, and we see the world being prepared for this today. We see very quickly how our world is inexorably moving towards all that the Bible has described and the judgment that will come. And when this judgment comes Christ will appear in all of his glory and that will be the revealing of us because we will be revealed with him.

But what must happen prior to these catastrophic events are the events that are described in the book of Revelation and other places regarding the tribulation. You see, something must happen before that, I believe. And that is the Church of Jesus Christ will be snatched away. We will be translated into heaven and it will be at that point, the Bible teaches, that we will receive this glorified body. That is the revealing *to* us.

So first he is going to reveal *to* us our glorified state and then he is going to reveal *us* when he comes again. And my point is this, beloved, the incomprehensible transformation of our bodies into conformity with our glorified Savior is the next thing that is going to happen on the prophetic time table. It is imminent. It is next. It is soon.

In fact, Paul says in 1 Corinthians 15:51:

Behold, I tell you a mystery; we will not all sleep, but we will all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet; for the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised imperishable, and we will be changed. For this perishable must put on the imperishable, and this mortal must put on immortality.¹¹

Beloved, this could happen at any moment. And then following that, the tribulation judgments will be poured out upon the earth followed by the Lord’s glorious and physical return. And at that moment the curse will be lifted and the saints will be revealed in all of their glory. That is what Paul talked about when he was speaking of the revealing of the sons of God. No wonder he would say therefore, “For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory that is to be revealed to

¹⁰ Philippians 3:20-21.

¹¹ 1 Corinthians 15:51-53.

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us.”¹² And then he went on to talk about how that all of creation waits eagerly for the revealing of the sons of God. Why? Because then the curse will be lifted. Then Christ in all of his glory will be set before the world. Little wonder that the apostle Paul would say, “Set your mind on these things, on the things above, not on the things of the earth.”

So, beloved, as we approach the text this morning I urge you to focus on our coming Savior and the undeserved inheritance that will be ours. This is his revelation. This is his unveiling, the unveiling of his glory in his wrath, the unveiling of his glory in his return and even our unveiling with him. That is what Revelation is leading up to.

And I might also add that the consuming passion that I have as your pastor, as your shepherd: I want you to see Christ! Because in him we behold the majesty and the consummate perfections of our God. Did not the writer of Hebrews tell us that Christ is the radiance of his glory and the exact representation of his nature? In fact, Jesus says, “If you have seen me, you have seen the Father.”

You see, when we behold Christ, we see our Creator God. When we behold Christ in every passage of Scripture we see the marvels of his nature. We see the perfections of his character. We see the wonder of his attributes. We behold his holiness and his sovereignty and his mercy and his grace, his omnipotence, his omniscience, his compassion, his faithful, covenant love that endures forever. As we look at Christ we see how that all we have and are and hope and need are found in him. And how do we see this? We see it through the lens of Scripture.

In Fact, Paul reminds us that the glory of God revealed in Christ was like that which was veiled once to Moses. Remember that? It was veiled to the Old Testament saints. 2 Corinthians 3:16 he says, “Whenever a person turns to the Lord, the veil is taken away.”¹³ Now when we come to Christ we can see who Christ is. They didn’t see that in the Old Testament. In fact, in verse 18 of 2 Corinthians Paul says, “But we all, with unveiled face, beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord.”¹⁴ That is the way it is now, beloved.

In other words, even as a mirror can be brought up close to our face and we can have an unobstructed and intimate view, so, too, the New Testament Scriptures give us an unobstructed and intimate view of our God, of our Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ. Therefore Paul says, “We... are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, just as from the Lord, the Spirit.”¹⁵ In other words, as we grow in our understanding of Christ and we constantly study the Word of God, the more we become like him. We move from one level of glory to the next level of glory. That is what theologians would call progressive sanctification.

And the more Christ-like we become, the more devoted we are to serving him and to loving the Lord our God with all of our heart, mind, soul and strength and our neighbors

¹² Romans 8:18.

¹³ 2 Corinthians 3:16.

¹⁴ 2 Corinthians 3:18.

¹⁵ Ibid.

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as ourselves. I want to be more like Christ and I hope you do. In fact, I really hope you do as you probably many times really hope I do because sometimes we are hard to get along with, aren't we? But we see that as we study the Word of God carefully that is what begins to happen. In fact, every pastor should share the apostle Paul's concern that he had for the Church at Corinth. Remember, they had all kinds of problems and he said in 2 Corinthians 11:3, "I am afraid that, as the serpent deceived Eve by his craftiness, your minds will be led astray from the simplicity and purity of devotion to Christ."¹⁶

So we open up the Word of God again this morning so that we can gaze at Jesus in all of his glory and we can understand more of the God who has created us and who has saved us by his grace.

And today we look, again, at what he has revealed to us about "Babylon the great," this coming world empire that will be ruled by the antichrist, a political and commercial empire that will intoxicate the kings of the earth, the merchants of the earth and all of the people of the earth with materialism, appealing to man's insatiable appetite for wealth, for material things, to live in luxury, to have lavish lifestyles, a form of idolatry that inevitably produces a false sense of self sufficiency and arrogance and a disregard for God.

So here the angelic messenger describes the final collapse of this coming world empire, Babylon the great, one that was rooted in ancient Babel. Remember where Satan once tried to establish a one world religion, a one world economy and so forth through his stooge Nimrod, a prototype of the antichrist.

Now I have divided chapter 18 into five sections to help us understand the nature of this final world empire and God's judgment on it. Last week we looked at her doom in the first three verses. Today we will look at her danger beginning in verse four. "And I heard another voice from heaven, saying, 'Come out of her, my people, that you may not participate in her sins and that you may not receive of her plagues.'¹⁷

This is an urgent call to not only leave this demonic city, but also to forsake all of its enticements, to abandon all of its temptations, all of the idols that are so alluring. "Come out of her, my people,"¹⁸ he says. This would be a reference to the saints that will be there. Obviously they will be new converts. They will be mingled in amidst the wicked. They will be struggling to survive. Undoubtedly family members will be urging them to wear the mark of the beast. There will be that tension.

We know from our Lord's words in Matthew that some family members will turn them into the authorities. So the angel here says, "Come out," for two reasons.

One, "That you may not participate in her sins."¹⁹

¹⁶ 2 Corinthians 11:3.

¹⁷ Revelation 18:4.

¹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹ Ibid.

Said differently, “That you might not fall victim to the influences of wanton materialism that will characterize this age, that you might not participate in this love for money and lust for things that distracts you from trusting and worshipping the Lord your God, that you might flee from the idol worship of luxurious living, that you might come out of this system that produces pride and a false sense of self sufficiency, a reliance on yourself and on man rather than on trusting God, that you might come out of this idolatry.”

Some people have rightfully labeled it “afluenza.” We are in the heart of it here in the United States whose symptoms are greed and immorality, sensuality, prostitution, drunkenness, pride, self aggrandizement, self reliance, self sufficiency, self indulgence and on and on it goes.

It is amazing. The more affluent the culture the more indifferent they are to the gospel. That is a fact. Pastors and missionaries in third world countries that I have talked with have grown increasingly reluctant to send their young men to the United States to be trained because once they do they quickly become materialistic for the most part and dissatisfied with their former life and their calling.

You know, friends, this affects all of us. The more we have, the more we want. And, typically, if you are honest, the less you will serve Christ. Not always, but that is always the temptation. And then the more we think we deserve, we are never satisfied.

I was thinking about it. Our young people today—and I don’t mean just teenagers. I mean young adults as well—couldn’t function without their cell phones, their iPods, their computers, their flat screen TVs, their DVD players, their designer clothes, their cars and so forth. But, once again, it will never be enough. You say, “Well, now, pastor, I... you know, not my kids.” Ok. Tell you what. Why don’t you give them a credit card and let’s see if their appetite is satisfied.

I did some research. About 43 percent of American families spend more than they earn each year. Average households carry almost 10,000 dollars in credit card debt. Personal bankruptcies have doubled in the past decade. You don’t think we live in a materialistic, idolatrous society? I did some of the math based on other research and here is what I found, that most Christians pay more on credit card penalties and interest in one year than they give to the Lord in five.

Beloved, the sin of materialism is far more rampant and devastating to the cause of Christ than most of us would ever admit. You know, it is hard to examine your own life when we are in the midst of something because we are all hopelessly biased in our own favor.

The angel says, “Come out.” He is speaking on behalf of God. He is crying out, “Come out.”

I think of John’s words in 1 John 2:15. He says, “Do not love the world nor the things in

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the world.”²⁰ The Greek word *KOSMOS* translates this word “world” and it simply means an orderly system or an organized system. We get our word cosmetic from that. It means to make order out of chaos, no offense to you dear ladies.

Come out of this world. Do not love this world nor the things of the world. And biblically the term *KOSMOS* means an orderly system controlled by Satan.

He goes on to say that if anyone loves the world, in other words, this orderly system that is ruled by Satan that rejects God and is a rival to him in every way:

If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh and the lust of the eyes and the boastful pride of life, is not from the Father, but is from the world. The world is passing away, and also its lusts.²¹

James warns us in James 1:27, “To keep oneself unstained by the world,”²² the *KOSMOS*. Be careful. It will get on you. It is toxic. And later on in chapter four and verse four he uses powerful symbolic language to describe believers who embrace this world. He says, “You adulteresses.” That is strong. “Do you not know that friendship with the world is hostility toward God?”²³

I find it appalling. I see Christians today whose lives cannot be distinguished from the unbelieving world. In fact, it is as though they strive to be as much like the world as they possibly can be, in terms of how they look and how they talk and how they act and the things that they support and embrace and applaud.

God calls this “adultery,” being spiritually unfaithful. He says, “Therefore whoever wishes to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God.”²⁴

You know, this was a huge problem in the first century Church in Corinth. Remember in 2 Corinthians six beginning at verse 14 the apostle Paul says:

Do not be bound together with unbelievers; for what partnership have righteousness and lawlessness, or what fellowship has light with darkness? Or what harmony has Christ with Belial, or what has a believer in common with an unbeliever? Or what agreement has the temple of God with idols? For we are the temple of the living God; just as God said, "I WILL DWELL IN THEM AND WALK AMONG THEM; AND I WILL BE THEIR GOD, AND THEY SHALL BE MY PEOPLE. Therefore, COME OUT FROM THEIR MIDST AND BE SEPARATE," says the

²⁰ 1 John 2:15.

²¹ 1 John 2:15-17.

²² James 1:27,

²³ James 4:4.

²⁴ Ibid.

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Lord. "AND DO NOT TOUCH WHAT IS UNCLEAN; And I will welcome you."²⁵

In Romans chapter 12, to give you another example of this, the apostle Paul, you will recall, calls us to offer ourselves as living sacrifices. Remember in verse one? He calls us to be living sacrifices and then he goes on to warn us about those things that could prevent this from happening and he says in verse two of Romans 12, “Do not be conformed to this world.”²⁶ And here he uses a different word than *KOSMOS*. He uses the word *AION* in Greek. And this is a reference to the spirit of the day, the philosophies of our day. It is a different Greek term here that expands on an orderly system controlled by Satan, *KOSMOS*. It speaks of the opinions that dominate the culture. And it is interesting that in Galatians 1:4 we read that “we have been delivered from this present evil age,” the same concept. We have been delivered from this.

So Paul is saying, “Be careful. Do not be conformed to this world.” 2 Corinthians 4:4. Satan is “the god of this world.” It goes on to say that he is the one that has “blinded the minds of the unbelieving that they might see the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ.” Be careful. Don’t become conformed to this world. 1 John five verse 19 John tells us the whole world—here he uses the word *KOSMOS*—“The whole world lies in the power of the evil one.”²⁷

Beloved, we have been called out of darkness into his marvelous light. We have been delivered from this evil age, so no wonder God speaks to us through the apostle Paul and says, “Do not be conformed to it.”

The word conformed comes from a Greek word *SUSCHEMATIZO* (soos-khay-mat-id’-zo) and it really means to have a masquerade or to act or to put on a pretence that follows a certain pattern or a certain scheme, an outward reflection of living that does not accurately reflect what is on the inside, a very fascinating Greek term. And because of the grammar, since this is in the passive voice, it indicates that this conformity of which we are warned is something that we, if we are not careful, will permit to happen to us unwittingly.

So he is saying, “Do not let this present evil age from which you have been delivered, fashion you into itself where you unwittingly begin to masquerade according to its principles and its philosophies rather than God’s, causing you to wear a mask that does not accurately reflect who you truly are on the inside, and that is a new creature in Christ.”

And he goes on and he says, “Rather than that, I want you to be transformed by the renewing of your mind.” Transformed is *METAMORPHOO* (met-am-or-fo’-o). We get our word metamorphosis from that. It is like the transformation of a caterpillar into a butterfly. There will be a spiritual metamorphosis that will occur where the inside is

²⁵ 2 Corinthians 6:14-17.

²⁶ Romans 12:2.

²⁷ 1 John 5:19.

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accurately reflected on the outside as a result of the renewing of our minds, as a result of immersing ourselves in the Word of God and allowing it to transform us. You see, beloved, when our minds are saturated and controlled by the Word of God, the inner man is conformed ever more into the image of Christ and the outer man begins to manifest that more accurately.

Dear Christians, please hear me. Either the world or the Word will conform you. Which is it? One will make you a living hypocrite acceptable to Satan, but the other will make you a living sacrifice acceptable to God. So Paul calls us to be transformed by the renewing of your mind. He goes on to say “that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect.”

So these are the divine principles behind the angel’s warning to the saints in Babylon. Come out that you may not participate in her sins, number one.

But, number two, he says, “That you may not receive of her plagues.”²⁸

That is a reference to the final judgment associated with the seventh bowl judgment that we have studied. Remember back in verse 18 of chapter 16 we read about a great earthquake that will flatten all of the cities of the nations. But we read that Babylon the great, this capital city of the antichrist will become a special object of divine wrath. In verse 19 we read, “And Babylon the great was remembered before God, to give her the cup of the wine of His fierce wrath.”²⁹ And so he is saying, “Come out because of these two things, because of the danger of participating in her sins and that you might avoid his wrath.” It is like... it is reminiscent of God calling Lot and his family out of Sodom. Get out because I am going to destroy it.

Well, we have seen the *doom* and the *danger* of Babylon. Thirdly, let’s notice her *deeds*. In verse five we have the reasoning for this impending judgment. “For her sins have piled up as high as heaven, and God has remembered her iniquities.”³⁰

It is interesting, “piled up.” It could be translated even “joined.” It is from a Greek word *KOLLAO* (kol-lah’-o) and it literally means to glue together. And the idea here is that the sins of Babylon have been glued together layer upon layer upon layer creating a final structure of wickedness that has reached all the way up to heaven.

This is imagery that reaches back to the ancient tower of Babel that first gave birth to this satanic system. In fact, Jeremiah speaks about this in Jeremiah chapter 51 verse nine and his pronouncement of judgment upon ancient Babylon. There the Holy Spirit uses the same language.

We read, “Forsake her and let us each go to his own country, For her judgment has reached to heaven And towers up to the very skies.”³¹ Same imagery.

²⁸ Revelation 18:4.

²⁹ Revelation 16:19.

³⁰ Revelation 18:5.

Notice more her deeds in verse six. “Pay her back even as she has paid, and give back to her double according to her deeds; in the cup which she has mixed, mix twice as much for her.”³² This is a plea for retributive justice based upon the Old Testament principle of an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth. Jesus spoke of this in Matthew 5:38. We read about it in the law, Exodus 21 for example. In Latin this was called *lex talionis*, the law of retribution, a principle that can even be found in ancient Babylon and the code of Hammurabi.

As a footnote this is a vengeance that is reserved solely for God. It is his prerogative. The Lord has said, “VENGEANCE IS MINE, I WILL REPAY.”³³ We are told to bless those who persecute us. We are told to love our enemies. Paul said in 1 Thessalonians 5:15, “See that no one repays another with evil for evil, but always seek after that which is good for one another and for all people.”³⁴

Now keep in mind the issue in all of these commands is the mortification of pride that inevitably seeks retaliation for some personal offense. That is just our nature. However, they do not preclude the use of whatever is necessary to protect yourself and your family or the need for retaliation against criminal people that would come in and attack our country, military aggression and so forth. In fact, war is literally an extension of capital punishment. Genesis 9:6, “Whoever sheds man’s blood, by man his blood shall be shed.”³⁵ But, of course, this is all the responsibility of government that God has placed over us that bears the sword in protection of the people. So we see the Lord invoking this principle of *lex talionis* upon ancient Babylon for the staggering cruelty that they perpetrated upon God’s covenant people Israel.

In Jeremiah 50 verse 29 we read, “Summon many against Babylon, All those who bend the bow: Encamp against her on every side, Let there be no escape. Repay her according to her work; According to all that she has done, so do to her; For she has become arrogant against the LORD, Against the Holy One of Israel.”³⁶

So, verse six, pay her back. “Pay her back even as she has paid, and give back to her double according to her deeds.”³⁷ Literally, “double the double things.”

Now keep in mind, this is not double in severity, but in measure. The idea is that of an exact equivalent. It is in the same... the concept here in the original language is the same sense as a person looking just like another person and we might say that is a person’s double.

³¹ Jeremiah 51:9.

³² Revelation 18:6.

³³ Romans 12:19; Hebrews 10:30.

³⁴ 1 Thessalonians 5:15.

³⁵ Genesis 9:6.

³⁶ Jeremiah 50:29.

³⁷ Revelation 18:6.

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So give back to her double according to her deeds and “the cup which she has mixed, mix twice as much for her.” In other words, make sure she gets every ounce of what she deserves.

And the angel continues in verse seven. “To the degree that she glorified herself and lived sensuously, to the same degree give her torment and mourning; for she says in her heart, ‘I SIT as A QUEEN AND I AM NOT A WIDOW, and will never see mourning.’”³⁸

Notice the three categories of wickedness that summarizes God’s indictment. First, she glorified herself. That is the sin of pride, self glorification. Secondly, she lived sensuously. Literally in the original language it could be translated “becoming wanton.” It is the sin of finding satisfaction and joy in luxury and material things rather than in God which includes lusting for pleasure and being consumed with self gratification, self indulgence, those kinds of things. And it even encompasses the idea of including the ruthless exercise of force and violence that people will use to secure what they feel like they must have. She lived sensuously.

Thirdly she says in her heart, “I SIT as A QUEEN AND I AM NOT A WIDOW, and will never see mourning.”³⁹ This is the sin of haughty self sufficiency, of self centeredness, all of which is tantamount to self deification.

Is this not a perfect summary of the world described in 1 John two that we read earlier? “The lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes and the boastful pride of life. It is not from the Father. It is from the world and the world is passing away and also its lusts.”

The phrase of verse seven, “I SIT as A QUEEN AND I AM NOT A WIDOW, and will never see mourning,”⁴⁰ really echoes the arrogant boast of ancient Babylon that is described in Isaiah chapter 47 verse seven when she said, “I will be a queen forever.”⁴¹ And then the Lord replies in verse eight and following.

Now, then, hear this, you sensual one, who dwells securely, Who says in your heart, ‘I am, and there is no one besides me. I will not sit as a widow, nor know loss of children.’ But these two things will come on you suddenly in one day: Loss of children and widowhood. They will come on you in full measure In spite of your many sorceries, in spite of the great power of your spells. You felt secure in your wickedness and said, ‘No one sees me,’ your wisdom and your knowledge, they have deluded you; For you have said in your heart, ‘I am, and there is no one besides me.’ But evil will come on you which you will not know how to charm away;

³⁸ Revelation 18:7.

³⁹ Ibid.

⁴⁰ Ibid.

⁴¹ Isaiah 47:7.

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and disaster will fall on you For which you cannot atone; And destruction about which you do not know Will come on you suddenly.⁴²

You may recall, friends, in Daniel five during Belshazzar's great feast a hand appeared on the wall and wrote an inscription:

God has numbered your kingdom and put an end to it... you have been weighed on the scales and found deficient... your kingdom has been divided and given over to the Medes and Persians.⁴³

And that very night Babylon fell, a picture of the judgment that will one day befall future Babylon the great, Satan's final empire ruled by the antichrist.

So after the angel concludes this... the list of Babylon's deeds that will bring about her doom, he goes on and he says, verse eight, "For this reason in one day her plagues will come, pestilence and mourning and famine, and she will be burned up with fire; for the Lord God who judges her is strong."⁴⁴ Over in verse 10 we read about it. "Woe, woe, the great city, Babylon, the strong city! For in one hour your judgment has come."⁴⁵ Verse 17. "For in one hour such great wealth has been laid waste!"⁴⁶ Verse 19. "And they threw dust on their heads and were crying out, weeping and mourning, saying, 'Woe, woe, the great city, in which all who had ships at sea became rich by her wealth, for in one hour she has been laid waste!'"⁴⁷

Indeed, "She will be burned up with fire for the Lord God who judges her is strong,"⁴⁸ as we read in verse eight. Man has no strength whatsoever in comparison to God. And it is amazing how foolish we can be to think that we can shake our puny little fist in God's face. Isaiah 43 verse 12 God says, "I am God. Even from eternity I am He, and there is none who can deliver out of My hand; I act and who can reverse it?"⁴⁹

And in chapter 46 verse nine he says, "I am God, and there is no other; I am God, and there is no one like Me, Declaring the end from the beginning, And from ancient times things which have not been done, Saying, 'My purpose will be established, And I will accomplish all My good pleasure.'"⁵⁰

Dear friend, I challenge you this morning to examine your heart, to examine it closely. Do you really want this world? How many more times are you willing to wake up in the middle of the night only to hear your accusing conscience telling you that you are not

⁴² Isaiah 45:8-11.

⁴³ Daniel 5:26-28.

⁴⁴ Revelation 18:8.

⁴⁵ Revelation 18:10.

⁴⁶ Revelation 18:17.

⁴⁷ Revelation 18:19.

⁴⁸ Revelation 18:8.

⁴⁹ Isaiah 43:12-13.

⁵⁰ Isaiah 46:9-10.

Revelation 18:4-8

right with God, that all of these things that you have embraced really don't satisfy? If that is you, you need Christ.

And, dear Christian, is this world from which you have been delivered, this world that Satan is temporarily allowed to rule, this world that is passing away, is this really what you desire? Is this really what you want? Be careful. If this is what you love, the Scripture is clear. The love of the Father is not in you.

You know, as we study this future system "Babylon the great" that will dominate the world, it is increasingly obvious to me that the United States of America is the greatest example of this anywhere in the world. Beloved, rejoice in the good things that God has given to us in our country for, indeed, we are a product of his grace, but please be careful not to allow this world to fashion you into its image.

I want to close with the words of John Bunyan and his great allegory *Pilgrim's Progress*. He described the world so vividly and he called it Vanity Fair, a city that he passed through.

Here is what he says, quote, "It bears this name, first, because the town where it sits is as superficial as vanity and also because all that is bought and sold there is meaningless vanity. The saying of the wise is true, quote, vanity of vanities all is vanity," end quote.

He goes on to say, "The fair is no newly erected enterprise. It is a thing of ancient standing. Let me tell you of its origin. About 5000 years ago two honest pilgrims were walking to the celestial city. Beelzebub, Apollyon and the legion together with all their companions saw that the path the pilgrims were traveling on to the city passed through this town of vanity so they devised a plan to set up a fair within it, a fair in which all kinds of worthless vanities could be sold all year long."

Of course, there is he is referring to Adam and Eve.

He goes on. "To this day, all kinds of merchandise is still sold there, houses, lands, jobs, positions, honors, promotions, titles, countries, kingdoms, lusts, pleasures. And there are also enjoyment of all sorts to suit one's preferences whores, prostitutes, wives, husbands, children, masters, servants, lives, blood, bodies sold, silver, gold, pearls, precious stones and more. In addition at this fair there can always be seen deceptive trickery, cheating, gambling, games, plays, amusements, fools, frauds, knaves and rogues of every type, not to mention the numerous thieves, murderers, adulterers and false witnesses of the basest sort. This fair," he says, "is ancient. Nonetheless its alluring power is still very great today."

He goes on to describe the reaction of the crowd when he and Faithful pass through Vanity Fair causing a great commotion. Here is what he said. First, Pilgrim's clothes which are really symbolic of their lifestyle, were so different from those that were traded at the fair that the people just stood and stared at them. Some said they were fools. Others said they were lunatics.

The second reaction he says, “Just as the people marveled at their clothing,” again, referring more to their lifestyle, “They also wondered at their speech for only a few could understand what they said. Thirdly, the pilgrims showed little interest in the items displayed for sale, something not at all appreciated by the city’s merchants. They did not care enough even to look at them. And when the merchants called upon them to buy they would put their fingers in their ears and cry, ‘Turn my eyes away from worthless things.’”

It goes on to say, “One merchant after observing them for a time mockingly said, ‘So what will you buy?’ But looking intently at him they answered, ‘We will buy the truth.’”

“This gave the people a reason to despise them even more. Some began mocking the pilgrims, taunting them and discrediting them and they called on others to beat them up.”

He goes on to describe how they are taken into custody. And then he says, quote, “We sat in a cage for quite some kind and were made to be objects of any passing person’s amusement, bullying or revenge.”

And then he concludes saying, “But the men were patient and holding their tongues refused to return evil for evil. On the contrary, they returned blessing for insults offering good words in exchange for bad and kindness for injuries inflicted,” end quote.

Beloved, come out. Beware of the world lest it fashion you into its mold.

Let’s pray together.

Father, thank you for these truths. Certainly, the sting of conviction falls upon all of our backs this morning. I pray that you would cause your Word to find a place in our hearts and bear much fruit for your glory. And by your grace, Lord, again, would you be pleased to bring conviction to those who do not know you? I pray that today would be the day they experience the miracle of the new birth. For it is in Jesus’ name that I pray. Amen.

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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