

WEEK 18: Mighty Is the Lord Our God..... Revelation 18

- **Last week**

- The seventh bowl brings a great earthquake
 - Jerusalem is split into three parts
 - The cities of the earth are destroyed
 - And Babylon the Great is judged
- We also saw the destruction of the false church
 - This apostate religion will be closely associated with Antichrist and his capital, Babylon
 - A false religion will be part of his global empire
- But God is far from done
- Chapter 18 will bring further destruction on Antichrist's global empire

- **The Fall of Babylon**

Fallen, fallen is Babylon the great! – Revelation 18:2 ESV

- God is going to bring His judgment against Babylon
- And it will be total, destroying the entire empire of Antichrist
- But there will be a variety of reactions to God's destruction of Babylon
- Why is this significant?
 - We tend to focus on what we see **happening**
 - But the emphasis is on how people are **responding**
 - Babylon's fall will elicit a variety of reactions
- What is the significance of Babylon?
 - It will be an evil world system, controlled by the Antichrist
 - But it will also be a symbol of all that stands opposed to God
 - It is the epitome of mankind's passion for power, possessions and prominence
 - Babylon exists anywhere or anytime godlessness is mixed with a desire for god-like world dominance
 - It is always accompanied by pride, immorality, and injustice

Pride

*“Look at this great city of Babylon! **By my own mighty power**, I have built this beautiful city as my royal residence **to display my majestic splendor.**” – Daniel 4:30 NLT*

Immorality

*King Belshazzar prepared a great banquet for a thousand of his nobles, and he was drinking wine in front of them all. **While under the influence of the wine**, Belshazzar issued an order to bring in the gold and silver vessels—the ones that Nebuchadnezzar his father had confiscated from the temple in Jerusalem—so that the king and his nobles, together with his wives and his concubines, could drink from them.*

So they brought the gold and silver vessels that had been confiscated from the temple, the house of God in Jerusalem, and the king and his nobles, together with his wives and concubines, drank from them. As they drank wine, they praised the gods of gold and silver, bronze, iron, wood, and stone. – Daniel 5:1-4 NLT

Injustice

*So listen to what I, the Lord, have planned against Babylon, what I intend to do to the people who inhabit the land of Babylonia. Their little ones will be dragged off. I will completely destroy their land **because of what they have done.** – Jeremiah 50:45 NLT*

- Babylon’s fall represents the demise of evil
- It pictures God’s judgment of Satan’s kingdom
- So when the angel announces Babylon’s fall, what kinds of responses does it produce?
 - **The kings of the earth:** A cry over power lost
*“Alas! Alas! You great city,
you mighty city, Babylon!
For in a single hour your judgment has come.” – vs 10*
 - They exhibit shock and dismay
 - They are political bed-partners with this immoral kingdom
 - They gained personally from the relationship
 - **The merchants of the earth:** A cry over financial loss
*“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!” – vs 14*
 - They had sold out for financial gain

- Godlessness can have its benefits
- But look at the contrast:

*For in a single hour all this wealth has been **laid waste**. – vs 17*

*But godliness with contentment is **great gain**. – 1 Timothy 6:6 ESV*

- **Ships captains and sailors:** A cry over irreplaceable revenue

*“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. – vs 19

- Their association with godlessness had been profitable
- And their losses would prove irreversible

But people who long to be rich fall into temptation and are trapped by many foolish and harmful desires that plunge them into ruin and destruction. For the love of money is the root of all kinds of evil. And some people, craving money, have wandered from the true faith and pierced themselves with many sorrows. – 1 Timothy 6:10 NLT

*...in the last days there will be very difficult times. **For people will love only themselves and their money.** They will be boastful and proud, scoffing at God, disobedient to their parents, and ungrateful. They will consider nothing sacred. They will be unloving and unforgiving; they will slander others and have no self-control. They will be cruel and hate what is good. They will betray their friends, be reckless, be puffed up with pride, and love pleasure rather than God. They will act religious, but they will reject the power that could make them godly. Stay away from people like that! – 2 Timothy 3:1-5 NLT*

- They display no sorrow for sin
- They exhibit no regret over their godlessness
- They cry over financial loss, not God’s judgment
- They had fallen in love with Babylon!

***Do not love this world nor the things it offers you, for when you love the world, you do not have the love of the Father in you. For the world offers only a craving for physical pleasure, a craving for everything we see, and pride in our achievements and possessions.** These are not from the Father, but are from this world. And this world is fading away, along with everything that people crave. But anyone who does what pleases God will live forever.*

– 1 John 2:15-17 NLT

- **The lure of Babylon**

- They were attracted by its offer of immorality
- They were tempted by its offers of luxury
- They sold out because it promised power and influence

Power – *dynamis* – the power and influence which belong to riches and wealth

- They had aligned themselves with a way of life
- Their interest in Babylon was purely selfish
- Their love of money had become their god

“No one can serve two masters. For you will hate one and love the other; you will be devoted to one and despise the other. You cannot serve both God and money.

“That is why I tell you not to worry about everyday life —whether you have enough food and drink, or enough clothes to wear. Isn’t life more than food, and your body more than clothing? – Matthew 6:24-25 NLT

- **A call to escape Babylon**

- God’s people were called to avoid Babylon at all costs
- Because of its evil influence
- But also because of God’s coming judgment
- God has always called His people out of Babylon

Leave Babylon! Flee from the Babylonians! Announce it with a shout of joy! Make this known! Proclaim it throughout the earth! – Isaiah 48:20 NLT

“People of Judah, get out of Babylon quickly! Leave the land of Babylonia! Be the first to depart!” – Jeremiah 50:8 NLT

...present your bodies as a sacrifice – alive, holy, and pleasing to God – which is your reasonable service. Do not be conformed to this present world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, so that you may test and approve what is the will of God – what is good and well-pleasing and perfect. – Romans 12:1-2 NLT

- **Payback time**

- It was time for God to judge Babylon and all for which she stood
- God had run out of patience
- Babylon had run out of time
- And God illustrated the nature of His judgment

Then a mighty angel took up a stone like a great millstone and threw it into the sea, saying, “So will Babylon the great city be thrown down with violence, and will be found no more... – Revelation 18:21 ESV

- God had prophesied this coming event
And Jeremiah said to Seraiah: "When you come to Babylon, see that you read all these words, and say, 'O Lord, you have said concerning this place that you will cut it off, so that nothing shall dwell in it, neither man nor beast, and it shall be desolate forever.' When you finish reading this book, tie a stone to it and cast it into the midst of the Euphrates, and say, 'Thus shall Babylon sink, to rise no more, because of the disaster that I am bringing upon her, and they shall become exhausted.'" – Jeremiah 51:61-64 ESV

- Babylon's fall would be...
 - o Violent, comprehensive, and devastating
 - No more music with which to celebrate their pagan festivals
 - No craftsmen to create their idols
 - No light to brighten their days
 - No marriages to lengthen their existence as a nation

- But there is good news
Nevertheless, the time will come when I will heal Jerusalem's wounds and give it prosperity and true peace. I will restore the fortunes of Judah and Israel and rebuild their towns. I will cleanse them of their sins against me and forgive all their sins of rebellion. Then this city will bring me joy, glory, and honor before all the nations of the earth!...in the empty streets of Jerusalem and Judah's other towns, there will be heard once more the sounds of joy and laughter. The joyful voices of bridegrooms and brides will be heard again, along with the joyous songs of people bringing thanksgiving offerings to the Lord.

The day will come, says the Lord, when I will do for Israel and Judah all the good things I have promised them.

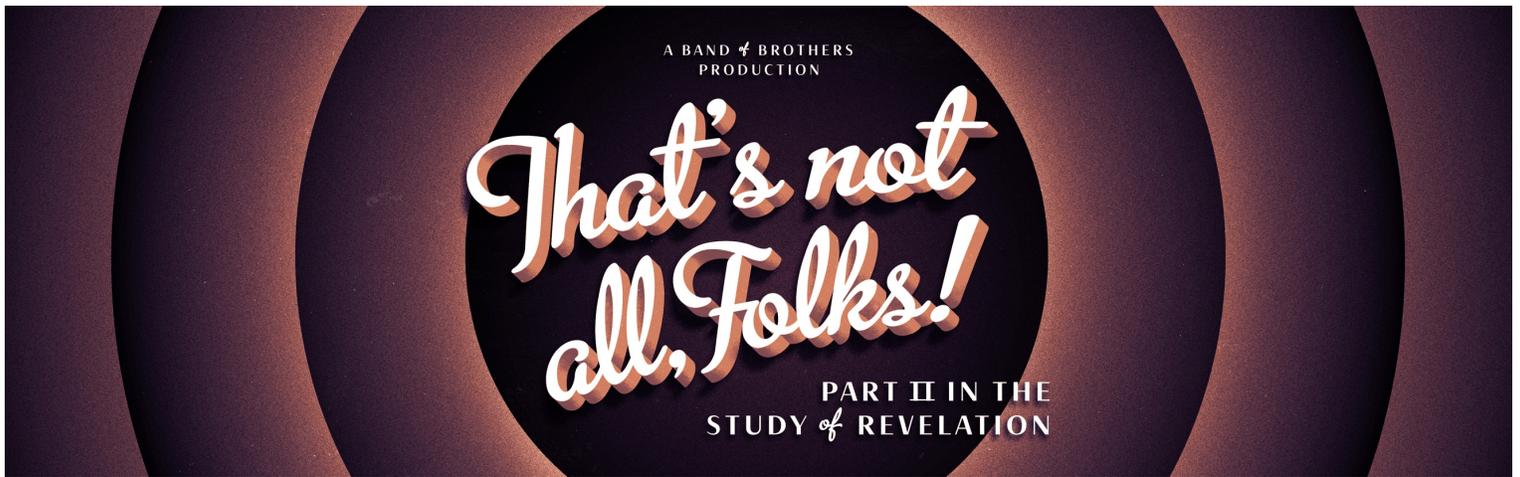
"In those days and at that time I will raise up a righteous descendant from King David's line. He will do what is just and right throughout the land.

"In that day Judah will be saved, and Jerusalem will live in safety. And this will be its name: 'The Lord Is Our Righteousness.'" – Jeremiah 33:6-11, 14-16 NLT

- As chapter 19 will show: We have reason to rejoice!

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- Why should we be able to rejoice even now because of the things God is going to do in the future?
- Discuss the ways in which we exhibit an inordinate and inappropriate love for Babylon in our own lives. Why do we love this world system so much and what is it we hope to get from it?
- Have someone read Revelation 19:4-5. Then take a few minutes to praise God for all that He is going to do in the future. Make it your closing prayer.



Week 19 Homework: Let Righteousness Reign. – Revelation 19

- Read Revelation 19. Also read pages 167-177 of the Devotionary™ study on Revelation.
- In this chapter, the storyline begins to get a bit more positive. According to verses 1-4, what are some of the reasons that God’s people have to rejoice?

Take just a minute to write out your expressions of gratitude to God for what He is going to do in that day?

Based on last-week’s lesson and the manner in which Babylon represents all that stands opposed to God, why should we find it appropriate to praise God for His destruction of Babylon?

- Read verses 6-10 again slowly, taking time to consider what you see happening here. Then read the attached article. In what ways does the article help you better understand and appreciate what is taking place in chapter 19 of Revelation?

Read Ephesians 5:25-27. In what ways does the Marriage Supper of the Lamb shed new light on this very familiar passage? How should it change the way we view the church's relationship with Jesus?

- Read verses 11-16. What is your immediate reaction when you read these verses? Do they excite you? Do they create in you a sense of pride and eager anticipation? Write down your thoughts here.

What is the significance of Jesus being called, "Faithful and true"?

Read Isaiah 63:1-6. Then consider what this reveals about Jesus' robe being dipped in blood. Why is this significant?

- Verses 17-21 seem to describe another supper. In what ways is it different from the Marriage Supper of the Lamb and who are its guests?

What is the marriage supper of the Lamb?

The concept of the marriage supper is better understood in light of the wedding customs in the time of Christ.

These wedding customs had three major parts. First, a marriage contract was signed by the parents of the bride and the bridegroom, and the parents of the bridegroom or the bridegroom himself would pay a dowry to the bride or her parents. This began what was called the betrothal period—what we would today call the engagement. This period was the one Joseph and Mary were in when she was found to be with child (Matthew 1:18; Luke 2:5).

The second step in the process usually occurred a year later, when the bridegroom, accompanied by his male friends, went to the house of the bride at midnight, creating a torchlight parade through the streets. The bride would know in advance this was going to take place, and so she would be ready with her maidens, and they would all join the parade and end up at the bridegroom's home. This custom is the basis of the parable of the ten virgins in Matthew 25:1–13. The third phase was the marriage supper itself, which might go on for days, as illustrated by the wedding at Cana in John 2:1–2.

What John's vision in Revelation pictures is the wedding feast of the Lamb (Jesus Christ) and His bride (the Church) in its third phase. The implication is that the first two phases have already taken place. The first phase was completed on earth when each individual believer placed his or her faith in Christ as Savior. The dowry paid to the bridegroom's parent (God the Father) would be the blood of Christ shed on the Bride's behalf. The Church on earth today, then, is "betrothed" to Christ, and, like the wise virgins in the parable, all believers should be watching and waiting for the appearance of the Bridegroom (the rapture). The second phase symbolizes the rapture of the Church, when Christ comes to claim His bride and take her to the Father's house. The marriage supper then follows as the third and final step. It is our view that the marriage supper of the Lamb takes place in heaven between the rapture and the second coming (during the tribulation on earth).

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