

Rev. 17:1-18 “Babylon’s Fall”

For the Children: In Josh. 6 Gideon tore down an altar to the false god, Baal. Gideon’s father said, “if the Baal is a god, let him fight for himself.” The idol could do nothing, because it was not God. In the Book of Revelation, “Babylon” is the name given to all of Satan’s attempts to get people to worship idols. One day, God will bring an end to every attempt to encourage idol-worship. There will be nothing Satan or any of these false gods can do, because the Lord is the only true God, and He rules over all. **Questions:** What are some “idols” people worship today? How does Satan make them look good to worship? Why should we worship God, rather than idols?

Introduction:

First Point: The Other Woman

- 1) The Great Harlot: “Babylon” is described as a great city and a great harlot – because, like the OT Babylon she tempted God’s people to worship idols. She is pictured as dressed like a harlot, to attract men, to depict Satan’s efforts to seduce men into idolatry. This resembles the Beast from the Earth, who confers economic advantage on those who submit. She could include apostate Israel and the apostate “church,” false religions and ideologies. She also helps the Beast
- 2) The Pure bride: The Harlot stands in contrast to the Bride of Christ, dressed in pure linen; she is also attractive (with her own precious stones), but with an inner beauty as well. She is the true City as well, God’s New Jerusalem
- 3) Great Influence: Babylon will have great influence all over the world and throughout the age. She sits on “many waters” – the nations under her control. See also Is. 23:17-18 re Tyre. She encourages persecution of God’s people, and is drunk on her apparent victory over them (v. 6). She seeks to get those under her drunk with the same violence

Second Point: The Beast Who Carries Her

- 1) Carrying the Woman: The Beast here is more like the Beast from the Sea – political power of the State. Just as the woman helps the secular State, so the State carries the woman (the seductive ideologies that encourage idolatry). Both take their character from Satan, and are therefore scarlet, like the dragon
- 2) An Emphasis on Power: We see the emphasis on power with the Beast’s 7 heads = 7 mountains = 7 kings, with 10 horns. This is not about Rome or 7 Caesars, as such; it is about the clash of 2 cities that spans the age. Hence the Beast “was, is not, and is about to come” – a parody of Christ’s eternal nature in 1:4,8. He parodies His resurrection, too, “coming up,” but only from the Abyss and to destruction. This Beast “is not” because the empires he uses keep collapsing. He is “of the 7” – of the same character as the 7 kings, for he is behind them. But he is a power in his own right (an 8th with 10 horns of his own. 10, i.e., many powerful kings are still to come from him before history ends. But the time is short from God’s perspective (1 hr) before Christ returns to end it all
- 3) Satan Divided: The Lord will restrain the effect of both Woman and Beast by dividing Satan’s house against itself. See Mt. 12:25-26. The State turns against the very ideologies that help it come to power, destroying them. Thus Babylon falls. See Jer. 51:7-8

Third Point: How the Believer Must React to Her

- 1) Understanding the Mystery: If we don’t understand how Christ’s victory on the cross leads to Babylon’s fall, we will perhaps react wrongly, with either attraction or despair. That is a mystery revealed (vss. 5,7). It is revealed that Christ is the Lord of Lords and King of Kings who overcomes; and His elect, called and faithful are with Him. Even John struggles to see this – he is appalled by the vision of the harlot (v.7)
- 2) Choose Your City and Your Woman: We are told of this contrast of women and clash of cities, so we choose the right one. We cannot have both. We are to be amazed at Christ and His Bride, not terrified of the Woman & the Beast

Conclusion:

