

BABYLON RIDES THE BEAST
REVELATION 17:1-6

Well let's turn in our Bibles, please, to the book of Revelation, chapter 17. We're going to be reading together verses 1 through 6.

“¹ And there came one of the seven angels which had the seven vials, and talked with me, saying unto me, Come hither; I will shew unto thee the judgment of the great whore that sitteth upon many waters: ² with whom the kings of the earth have committed fornication, and the inhabitants of the earth have been made drunk with the wine of her fornication. ³ So he carried me away in the spirit into the wilderness: and I saw a woman sit upon a scarlet colored beast, full of names of blasphemy, having seven heads and ten horns. ⁴ And the woman was arrayed in purple and scarlet color, and decked with gold and precious stones and pearls, having a golden cup in her hand full of abominations and filthiness of her fornication: ⁵ and upon her forehead was a name written, MYSTERY, BABYLON THE GREAT, THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS AND ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH. ⁶ And I saw the woman drunken with the blood of the saints, and with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus: and when I saw her, I wondered with great admiration.”

Now when we outlined the book of Revelation back when we introduced this book, we said that Revelation could be divided into two halves. The first half consisted of chapters 1 through 11, and there we saw the visible and the physical conflict between the people of God and the children of Satan that took place here upon this earth. The second half of this book consisted of chapters 12 to 22, and there we saw the invisible and spiritual conflict between Christ and Satan, which provided the explanation as to what was behind and what was driving the physical, visible conflict on earth, and why things were happening the way they were happening in chapters 1 to 11.

As we have looked at the second half of this book of Revelation, then, which reveals to us the invisible and spiritual conflict between Christ and Satan, we have been introduced to Satan and his helpers. We were introduced to Satan in chapter 12 as being the dragon, and we saw how he persecuted the church.

But Satan does not do his work alone. Satan is assisted on this earth in his work by anti-Christian government, which is the beast out of the sea. Satan is assisted in his work on earth by anti-Christian religion, which is the false prophet. Satan is assisted in his work on earth by anti-Christian society, which is Babylon. And Satan is assisted in his work on earth by an anti-Christian populace, which are those who think and who act as the beast tells them to, and thus they are said to have the mark of the beast in their forehead and in their hand.

Now Satan and all of his four helpers are a formidable force against the people of God. And yet, in this second half of the book of Revelation, we see Christ systematically destroying Satan's helpers, and ultimately and finally destroying Satan himself. Now this destruction of Satan and

his helpers all takes place at the end of this age, when Christ returns. *But*, this destruction of Satan and his helpers is described over a series of chapters and over a series of parallel cycles.

For example, the destruction of those who have the mark of the beast, the anti-Christian populace, is described in the fourth parallel cycle of this book in chapter 14, verses 9 to 11, at the end of the age when the final judgment comes. And then the destruction at the end of this age of anti-Christian society, called Babylon, is briefly spoken of in the fourth parallel cycle in chapter 14 and verse 8. It's also briefly spoken of in the fifth parallel cycle in chapter 16 and verse 19.

But the destruction of Babylon is covered at great length in the sixth parallel section of this book in chapter 17 and 18. Further on in the sixth parallel section of this book, at the end of chapter 19, we see the destruction of anti-Christian government, called the beast, and the destruction of anti-Christian religion, called the false prophet, in chapter 19 and verse 20, at the end of this age, when Christ returns. Finally, in the seventh parallel section of this book, we see the destruction of Satan himself at the end of this age, when Christ returns, in chapter 20 and in verse 10.

And so by the time we get to the end of the book, Satan and all of his helpers are defeated and conquered and destroyed by Christ, and the people of God who were so severely hated and persecuted by them are delivered and vindicated and exalted into the everlasting kingdom of God in the new heavens and the new earth. Satan is doing his best in this age to harm the church and to harm the people of God, but at every point, he is unsuccessful in dismantling and in destroying the people of God and the kingdom of God on this earth.

But just because these various destructions of Satan and his helpers are described over the course of seven chapters, and over the course of numerous parallel cycles, does not mean that these destructions of Satan and his helpers is strung out over an extended period of time, nor does it mean that they are sequentially accomplished, one after the other. The destruction of Satan and his helpers all occur at the same time. They all occur at the second coming of Christ. They all occur at the end of the age.

And so until the end of the age, Satan and his four helpers are active and they are doing all they can to overthrow Christ's kingdom. However, Satan and his helpers are restrained in their efforts to do so by Christ, and they are punished for their efforts to do so by Christ, and they are made miserable in their efforts to do so by Christ, through the trumpet judgments and through the vial judgments that Christ brings upon them.

Satan and his helpers don't have smooth sailing in the work they're trying to do. They are restrained by Christ, they are punished by Christ, and they are made miserable by Christ the whole time they are fighting against Christ. And that restraint and that punishment and that misery is seen in the seven trumpet judgments and the seven vial judgments. And this is the reason why they never succeed in eradicating the church from the earth, even though they try

mightily to do so. In fact, they try to the point of self-destruction, but they never achieve what they intended to accomplish. Satan and his helpers do terrible things, but they never achieve their goals, and they always go down to defeat.

Now in this new chapter that we are beginning, chapter 17, we are also beginning the sixth parallel section of this book, which runs from chapter 17 through the end of chapter 19. We have just been brought to the time of the second coming of Christ at the end of chapter 16, which concluded the fifth parallel section.

You recall that each of these parallel sections in the book of Revelation take us from the first coming of Christ to the second coming. And so we just finished the fifth parallel section, in which at the end of chapter 16, we were brought once again to the second coming of Christ.

And now we're beginning a new parallel section, the sixth parallel section, at the end of which we will be brought once again to the second coming of Christ, in chapter 19. So chapter 17, once again, takes us back to the beginning of this age, and it will bring us to the second coming of Christ, once again, at the end of chapter 19.

Now we have seen that each of these parallel sections that we have previously looked at has had a different theme which they emphasized, and of course, this section that we're about to embark on is no different. The theme of this sixth parallel section is the defeat of Babylon, the beast, and the false prophet.

Satan has four helpers, and we have already seen the defeat of those who have the mark of the beast in chapter 14. It was described to us at length in verses 9 through 11. Here in this sixth parallel section, we see the full description of the defeat of the remaining three helpers of Satan. The defeat of Babylon is of course given the largest treatment. It covers all of chapter 17 and chapter 18. But in chapter 19 and verse 20, the defeat of the beast and the false prophet are also clearly declared.

So chapter 17 tells us about the nature of Babylon and its relationship to the beast; chapter 18 tells us about the destruction of Babylon; chapter 19 tells us about the second coming of Christ and the destruction of the beast and the false prophet. This is the lay and the outline of this sixth parallel section. It deals with the destruction of Babylon and the beast and the false prophet.

So today, as we begin chapter 17, we will look at the nature of Babylon and her relationship with the beast.

In the first place then this morning, let us consider together the character of Babylon. The character of Babylon is described in verses 1 to 2. It says, "¹ And there came one of the seven angels which had the seven vials, and talked with me, saying unto me, Come hither; I will shew unto thee the judgment of the great whore that sitteth upon many waters: ² with whom the kings

of the earth have committed fornication, and the inhabitants of the earth have been made drunk with the wine of her fornication.”

Recall that John had just seen the vision of the seven angels pouring out the seven vials of God’s wrath in chapter 16. Here in chapter 17, one of those seven angels that poured out those vials of wrath now comes to John and invites him to view the judgment that God is going to exercise upon Babylon. Notice verse 1, he says, “Come hither; I will shew unto thee the judgment of the great whore.” So then, this chapter and the entire next chapter is all about this work of God in bringing judgment upon Babylon.

Now the fact that this great whore that sits upon many waters is indeed the same as Babylon itself, and is a symbolic image of her, is made plain in verse 5, where it says she bears the title on her forehead of Babylon the Great. Satan always has his counterfeits of what Christ is and what Christ has, and this case is no different. Babylon is called the great whore that commits fornication with the kings and the people of the earth, and is the counterfeit of the bride of Christ, who is the faithful wife of the Lamb of God. The bride of Christ stands in direct opposition to the harlot Babylon. The bride of Christ is pure and holy and good, while the harlot Babylon is filthy and defiled and evil.

The reason why Babylon is called the great harlot is because, just like a prostitute, anti-Christian society allures and tempts and seduces and draws people away from God. It draws people away from God through the enticements of ostentatious luxury, corrupt entertainment, sexual perversion, and mind-altering drugs. Babylon appeals to men’s pride, to their lust for power, to their desire to be worshiped by others and to be glorified in the eyes of men. Babylon encompasses the whole of the corrupt culture of the world that appeals to the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life.

In a word, Babylon is anti-Christian society in all of its vices, in all of its humanism, and in all of its blasphemies against God. Babylon says to the people of the world, “Come and fornicate with me. Taste of my pleasures, and indulge in my vices. I will give you a garden of delights, and you will find an intoxicating fulfillment of every desire that you have, no matter how evil it may be. I offer it all.” This, then, is the great harlot Babylon that seduces the people of the earth to yield themselves to evil and to turn away from God.

Now it says of the great harlot Babylon in verse 1 that she sits upon many waters. Now Old Babylon that captured Israel and brought her into captivity was a city that literally sat on many waters. The Euphrates River ran right through the middle of the city, and there was an extensive system of canals within the city that distributed waters, and so Babylon was often called the City of Waters. Well, this spiritual, metaphorical Babylon, which represents anti-Christian society, is said here to sit upon many waters.

Now we are not left in doubt as to what this means. Notice verse 15 of this same chapter. Revelation 17:15: “And he saith unto me, The waters which thou sawest, where the whore

sitteth, are peoples, and multitudes, and nations, and tongues.” So this whore, this anti-Christian society, is sitting upon peoples, and multitudes, and nations, and tongues.

What this means is that the collective culture of the people of the earth in rebellion against God, is what constitutes the basis upon which this anti-Christian society is built, and they are the source from which it arises, and they indicate the scope of its activity and its influence. Wherever in the world unsaved people gather to form a society, there is where Babylon exists, no matter the nationality, no matter the language, no matter the race. Babylon is the collective cultural consensus and the anti-Christian society of all of those who bear the mark of the beast, wherever they live throughout the world, in whatever age in which they live. In a word, all wicked societies are Babylon the Great Harlot, wherever they may be distributed throughout the world.

Simply put, Babylon is anti-Christian society that seeks to seduce the believer into forsaking Christ for the pleasures of this world. We see this in verse 2. Notice, it says regarding this harlot, “with whom the kings of the earth have committed fornication, and the inhabitants of the earth have been made drunk with the wine of her fornication.”

The kings of the earth, it says in verse 2, fornicate with Babylon; that is, they encourage and they participate in what the godless societies of the world want and desire. This is because the kings of the earth derive their existence and their wealth and their power from the anti-Christian societies which they rule.

If an anti-Christian populace wants wicked and sinful policies put in place, the politicians bow the knee to them and give them what they want so the society will support them and keep them in power. Kings, who are supposed to provide godly moral leadership to the nation, instead participate in the vices of the nation themselves, and even encourage further evil, in order to win favor and win the further extension of their rule and of their reign. The kings of the earth have intercourse with the pride, and the materialism, and the vice, and the evil of the people that they rule, and are often the worst participants in those things themselves.

And then, not only do the kings of the earth commit fornication with the harlot Babylon, the people of the earth are drunken and intoxicated with the wine of the wickedness that evil societies pour out for them to drink. Every day, through the television, the Internet, the newspapers and magazines, the radio, the public school system, and the entertainment industry, the inhabitants of the earth are made drunk with anti-Christian attitudes and are encouraged to engage in anti-Christian behavior.

This is why, as Christians, we need to maintain separation from this anti-Christian society, in terms of not indulging in its sins and its seductions and its vices. We have to live in the midst of this anti-Christian, Babylonish society, but just like Daniel and Shadrach and Meshach and Abednego, we must refuse to bow to its idols, we must refuse to fear its power, and we must refuse to indulge in its sins and its dainties which it offers to us.

We must maintain our witness, we must maintain our prayer life, and we must maintain our godliness, even though it angers Babylon and provokes its hatred and persecution and makes them want to throw us in their lions' den. Like Pilgrim and Faithful in the book *Pilgrim's Progress*, we must walk through Vanity Fair as we go through this world on our way to the Celestial City, but we must not be a partaker of what it is offering us.

Notice if you will, Revelation chapter 18 and verse 4: "And I heard another voice from heaven, saying, Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues. ⁵ For her sins have reached unto heaven, and God hath remembered her iniquities. ⁶ Reward her even as she rewarded you, and double unto her double according to her works: in the cup which she hath filled fill to her double. ⁷ How much she hath glorified herself, and lived deliciously, so much torment and sorrow give her: for she saith in her heart, I sit a queen, and am no widow, and shall see no sorrow. ⁸ Therefore shall her plagues come in one day, death, and mourning, and famine; and she shall be utterly burned with fire: for strong is the Lord God who judgeth her."

So God is telling us, Come out of Babylon, do not participate in her sins. God is going to pour out His wrath upon anti-Christian society and all it stands for, all its practices, and all that it promotes, in terms of its wickedness and vice. So we do well to heed that advice of Revelation 18, verse 4: Come out of her, my people, and be not partakers in her sins, lest you receive her plagues. We do well to heed that advice and to keep ourselves unspotted from the world. And just as God destroyed Old Testament Babylon, God will also destroy the anti-Christian society in which we live today.

So do not be drawn into the sins of this age and the vanity and the pride that the world so powerfully encourages. Love not the world. Do not become intoxicated with the material and the sensual pleasures that it offers. This world will pass away with the lusts thereof, but they that do the will of God will abide forever.

And so this, then, is the character of Babylon. She represents anti-Christian seduction. She seduces the kings, she seduces the people, she says to both kings and people, "Come and follow me and indulge in my vices and my sins, and you will find happiness and fulfillment of all of your wicked desires." And the peoples across the globe and through the centuries have bought in to that seduction of the harlot, and as a result, Babylon has existed from the time of Christ to the present moment, and will continue to exist until Christ returns, for Babylon is nothing more than anti-Christian society that constitutes the kingdom of Satan.

And while we have to physically live in the midst of it, we don't want to, as it were, live in the city. It says of the church, you recall, in Revelation chapter 12, that she fled to the wilderness. Remember the story of Abraham and Lot? Who went to the city? Who stayed out in the wilderness? Abraham, the man of God, stayed in the wilderness, and would not go into Sodom and participate in its lifestyle. Unfortunately, Lot did, and Lot lost.

And so metaphorically, we have to live, as it were, in the wilderness and not participate in the sins of the city. We have to be separate from it, we have to come out from among those sins and live in a wilderness of isolation from the pleasure-mad wickedness of the city in which we live.

Well that brings us then to our second major point. Having seen the character of Babylon in verses 1 to 2, notice secondly the appearance of Babylon in verses 3 to 6. Now it says in verse 3, “³ So he carried me away in the spirit into the wilderness: and I saw a woman sit upon a scarlet colored beast, full of names of blasphemy, having seven heads and ten horns. ⁴ And the woman was arrayed in purple and scarlet color, and decked with gold and precious stones and pearls, having a golden cup in her hand full of abominations and filthiness of her fornication: ⁵ and upon her forehead was a name written, MYSTERY, BABYLON THE GREAT, THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS AND ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH. ⁶ And I saw the woman drunken with the blood of the saints, and with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus: and when I saw her, I wondered with great admiration.”

The angel gave a verbal description of the harlot Babylon in verses 1 to 2, and now John has a visual depiction of the harlot Babylon in verses 3 to 6. So we move from a verbal to a visual description of Babylon, but the message is still the same. John is carried away, it says in verse 3, “in the spirit into the wilderness.” You recall that back in chapter 12, the church fled into the wilderness to escape the persecution of the dragon. So it is not surprising that John would see the beast and Babylon in the wilderness, chasing and persecuting the church who had fled there to escape. And what did John see in the wilderness? He saw Babylon the harlot sitting upon the beast.

Now the identity of this beast in verse 3 is clear from the description of it. Notice it says, “I saw a woman sit upon a scarlet colored beast, full of names of blasphemy, having seven heads and ten horns.” Now the beast is said to be red in color—scarlet is red. And you recall that the dragon representing Satan was also said to be red in color in Revelation chapter 12. Red is the color of blood, and both the dragon and the beast are red because they are drenched in the blood of the Christians that they have slaughtered. Revelation 13, verses 1 to 2, says that the dragon empowers the beast to do this work of slaughter, which is then described explicitly in chapter 13 and verse 7.

Furthermore, the beast in Revelation 13:1 has seven heads and ten horns, just like this beast has. And the beast of chapter 13 and verse 1 has the name of blasphemy on his head, just like this beast has. So then, we conclude that the beast of chapter 17 and verse 3 is the same as the beast out of the sea in chapter 13, verses 1 to 8. This beast is anti-Christian government that is Satan’s most powerful helper.

Now verse 3 tells us about the relationship between Babylon and the beast, between anti-Christian society and anti-Christian government. And the relationship between Babylon and the

beast, is that anti-Christian society rides upon anti-Christian government. Anti-Christian society rides the beast, and anti-Christian society rules the beast.

Notice if you will Revelation 17 and verse 18. It says, “And the woman which thou sawest is that great city,”—that’s Babylon. Now notice what it says about Babylon: “which reigneth over the kings of the earth.” Now when you have a horse and a rider, who’s in control? The rider controls the horse, right? And here we see this woman riding the beast. And then we’re explicitly told in verse 18, that this Babylon rules over the kings of the earth.

Now the fact is that even though kings ostensibly rule over the people, the people are the ones who provide the king with his authority and his tenure, and it is a historical fact that popular revolt will take down any king. And so we see the harlot Babylon riding the beast so that the beast serves the interests of the harlot Babylon, and the beast follows the direction of the anti-Christian society, over which they rule.

Now then, at the end of this age, we will see the anti-Christ and his transnational coalition of kings destroying the harlot Babylon. Anti-Christian government will rise up and destroy the anti-Christian society in the end of time, and how that’s all going to work we’re going to address in the future, when we get to verse 16 of chapter 17, in which it says that this transnational coalition of anti-Christ and his ten horns, “these shall hate the whore, and shall make her desolate and naked, and shall eat her flesh, and burn her with fire.” We’re going to talk about what that means in the weeks to come.

But for now, all throughout this age, the harlot rides the beast and the harlot rules the beast. Government reflects the will of the people, and government serves the collective voice of the people. That’s how governments rise to power, and that’s how governments stay in power—by serving the people over which they rule, and thereby gaining their popular support.

So then, what does anti-Christian society look like? Verse 4 tells us. “And the woman was arrayed in purple and scarlet color, and decked with gold and precious stones and pearls, having a golden cup in her hand full of abominations and filthiness of her fornication.” This is what anti-Christian society looks like. Anti-Christian society looks wealthy and regal. Anti-Christian society looks attractive and inviting and desirable. Purple, of course, is the color of rulers. Gold and jewels and pearls speak of her wealth. And the golden cup of her hand speaks of sensuous enticements.

This woman, this Babylon, this harlot Babylon, this anti-Christian society—she looks splendid and attractive and inviting and glorious. She offers a beautiful cup to drink out of that conveys the impression that because it’s made out of gold, it must contain the finest of wine within it. But looks are deceiving. The cup is full of the abominations and the filthiness of her fornication.

Understand that the world presents itself as elevated, and sophisticated, and desirable, and exciting. But all it has to offer is abominable filth and disgusting perversions that lead to misery

and to destruction. Evil often wears an attractive face and presents itself as exceedingly desirable, but its end is bitter and its fruits are poisonous.

Don't be deceived by external appearances and by initial impressions of what the world has to offer you. Sin is always deceitful, and even though it has a moment of pleasure, it always has a bitter ending.

Now what the harlot Babylon is by appearance in verse 4, she is by title in verse 5. Notice it says, "and upon her forehead was a name written, MYSTERY, BABYLON THE GREAT, THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS AND ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH." Now in Revelation, we have seen that a name on the forehead reveals the individual's character and their relationship, either to God or to Satan. If you have the mark of the beast in your forehead, it reveals the character you possess and your relationship to Satan. If you have the seal of God in your forehead, that represents your character and the relationship that you sustain with God. Well, this harlot's name on her forehead reveals her evil character and her relationship with the beast.

Now the first word "mystery" is really not part of the title itself, but rather is a declaration that something that has formerly been hidden is now going to be revealed by God. This is how the word "mystery" is used in the Bible. It's not used of something spooky, it's not used of something occultic. The word "mystery" is used to indicate, Hey! Pay attention now. Something that previously was concealed is now going to be revealed by God. This is something people could have never figured out on their own, but now they know it because God has revealed this hidden truth. And so we see this is how the word "mystery" is used, for example, in Ephesians chapter 3, verses 3 to 5.

Now what is being revealed, the mystery that's being uncovered, is this title that describes the identity of this woman. Who is this woman? She is Babylon the Great—a claim of arrogant superiority and prideful selfglorification. Look at how great I am! I am Babylon the Great. And you remember, that's what Nebuchadnezzar said in Daniel chapter 4, right? Is not this great Babylon that I have built for the glory of my name? And modern day society has the spirit of Nebuchadnezzar. We are great Babylon!

But she is the shameless source of every perversion and every abomination on the earth. Notice it says, "Babylon the Great, the mother," that is, the source, "of harlots and abominations of the earth." Anti-Christian society is the source of every kind of wickedness, and actively fosters and promotes every kind of vice. The world is proud of its wickedness, and boldly advertises its wickedness, and actively promotes its wickedness, and is utterly shameless in the declaration of its wickedness.

Jeremiah chapter 3 and verse 3 speaks of hardened sinners having a whore's forehead, who refuse to be ashamed. And this description fits the spirit of our culture that proudly promotes every perversion as a virtue, and every virtuous person as a bigot. They shamelessly glorify homosexuality, and adultery, and transgenderism, and sodomite marriage, with no shame. And

anyone who opposes it is shamed by our culture. And so we have this whore, boldly and brazenly advertising herself to the world, offering the worst and being utterly shameless in enticing people to participate in it.

Now notice verse 6: “And I saw the woman drunken with the blood of the saints, and with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus: and when I saw her, I wondered with great admiration.” Now not only have the inhabitants of the earth been made drunk with the wine of the harlot’s fornication, as verse 2 said. Remember verse 2? It says, “The inhabitants of the earth have been made drunk with the wine of her fornication.” So not only have the inhabitants of the earth been made drunk with the wine of the harlot’s fornication, the harlot herself is also drunk, verse 6. She’s drunk with the blood of the saints and the martyrs of Jesus. You see, anti-Christian society knows very clearly who the Christians are, and what they stand for, and the message they preach, and the Christ that they follow.

The word “martyr” means “witness,” and these are the saints and the witnesses of Christ. They are saints. They live holy and separated lives. They are martyrs. They bear witness to Jesus Christ. The world knows who we are. They know the message we preach, and they know the Christ that we worship and follow.

And yet, you recall that Roman society reveled in seeing the blood of Christians spilled in the Coliseum, and they were drunken with amusement and entertainment and pleasure at the sight of the spilling of the blood of the Christians in the Coliseum. And the crowds roared as the blood spilled. They were drunken with the blood.

And don’t you see the same thing in the ISIS videos that are being put forth on the Internet, where they just revel in the shedding of the blood of Christians as they cut their throats, film it, and put it on the Internet. Roman society reveled in seeing the blood of Christians spilled in the Coliseum, and anti-Christian societies ever since have rejoiced in shedding the blood of believers. The wicked find it intoxicating to see believers martyred. It is party time for them when they can kill Christians. Revelation 11:10 makes that clear. Islam has been doing it for 1400 years. Atheist nations have been doing it. Self-serving kings have been doing it. It’s been going on ever since the time of Christ.

It has been true throughout this age, and it will especially be true when Satan is loosed and the anti-Christ arises at the end of this age that the blood of Christians will flow, and anti-Christian society, it says in Revelation chapter 11:10, will rejoice and send presents to each other over the slaughter of the church.

As John beholds this vision, he is overwhelmed and amazed at the power and the success of the harlot Babylon. Now he had just been told, you recall in verse 1, that he was going to be shown the judgment of the great whore, but all he has seen so far is her glory and her success. And so he stands, verse 6 says, dumbfounded, amazed, and overwhelmed by what he saw.

At this stage in God's plan, in 2016, we too stand amazed at the success of Satan and at the accomplishments of the world in the world's fight against God. It seems like the world has won. It seems like the world has nothing but popularity, and power, and success, and acclaim, and applause, while the Christians are the downtrodden, despised, and persecuted minority.

But the angel is now poised to show John the rest of the story. And then, this apparent success will be seen for the failure that it is. In verse 7, it says, "And the angel said unto me, Wherefore didst thou marvel? I will tell thee the mystery of the woman, and of the beast that carrieth her," and then he goes on and describes her utter destruction.

And so we, just like John, have to look past the present and into the future, and when we understand the destruction that Babylon the great harlot will experience, we will not be so intimidated, and we will not be so discouraged by her apparent success in the present, as she rides the beast and revels in the destruction of the saints, and as she promotes her wickedness in the world.

Listen to me carefully: The story does not stop at verse 6. That's where we're at right now, people. We're at verse 6. But that's not the end of the story. The story stops at Revelation 22:21. We need to remember that, and we need to be encouraged by that, that as we find ourselves overwhelmed in the face of the power of Babylon, as we live in the midst of this crooked and corrupt culture, we need to understand that we need to maintain separation from the wickedness of it, we need to walk through it as pilgrims and as strangers and as sojourners, and we need to recognize that in the end, as it says in chapter 18, "her plagues shall come in one day, death, and mourning, and famine; and she shall be utterly burned with fire: for strong is the Lord God who judgeth her."

There is coming a day when God is going to say, That's enough! And He is going to rise in judgment and He is going to utterly destroy the pride and the arrogance and the perversion of our culture and society. And when He does, then the saints will shine as the stars of heaven, and we will be exalted, and we will be vindicated, and we will be conducted into the new heavens and the new earth, into a perfect society that is the antithesis of everything Babylon was. And we shall live in that perfect, new Jerusalem forever and ever and ever, and Babylon will be gone. She will be cast into the lake of fire.

So don't be attracted to and impressed by the glitter and the glamour and the pleasures that the world is currently offering you, saying, "Come away from Christ. Come lie with me. Come indulge yourself in my pleasures." Turn away from that harlot. Be the faithful bride of Jesus Christ, so that when He comes, He will find you to be a virgin, not having had intercourse with this world. And thus, you will be conducted into the marriage supper of the Lamb to be with Him forever. Shall we pray together.

Our Father, we are so grateful for this book that reveals to us the deceitfulness of the world, and the truth about its apparent success, and about the illusion that it conveys of having value, and substance, and pleasure.

Father, may we see through and see past the external deceit, and recognize that this is a wicked world. Paul speaks of it in Galatians as being this “present evil world.” And so may we walk through this world unspotted. As it says in James, Pure religion and undefiled is to visit the fatherless and the widows, and to keep oneself unspotted from the world.

And so, may we live lives of separation and come out from among her and be separate, and touch not the unclean thing. And thus, you will be a God to us and we will be your people. Father, we pray this in Jesus’ name. Amen.