

# A Tale of Two Cities – Part One: Babylon Will Be No More

*Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.*

Date: 21 April 2024

Preacher: Paul Brennan

[ 0 : 00 ] But this evening we are focused again on God's Word and we've been studying with Paul the book of Revelation. And we're coming this evening to Revelation chapter 17 and 18.

And I'm going to read quite a long portion, the whole of chapter 17 and 18 and a little bit into chapter 19 as well because it all hangs together. So it's a long reading, but I'm sure you'll be able to follow along.

If you need a Bible, there's some at the sides, some at the front, some at the back. Don't be shy. Go and grab one. And you'll be able to see where this comes from and see that I'm reading the words that are here.

So Revelation chapter 17 then at verse 1. Then one of the angels who had the seven bulls came and said to me, Come, I will show you the judgment of the great prostitute who is seated on many waters.

With whom the kings of the earth have committed sexual immorality. And with the wine of whose sexual immorality the dwellers on earth have become drunk. And he carried me away in the spirit into a wilderness.

[ 1 : 08 ] And I saw a woman sitting on a scarlet beast that was full of blasphemous names. And it had seven heads and ten horns. The woman was arrayed in purple and scarlet and adorned with gold and jewels and pearls, holding in her hand a golden cup full of abominations and the impurities of her sexual immorality.

On her forehead was written a name of mystery, Babylon the Great. Mother of prostitutes and of the earth's abominations. And I saw the woman drunk with the blood of the saints, the blood of the martyrs of Jesus.

And when I saw her, I marveled greatly. But the angel said to me, Why do you marvel? I will tell you the mystery of the woman and of the beast with seven heads and ten horns that carries her.

The beast that you saw was and is not and is about to rise from the bottomless pit, the abyss, and go to destruction. And the dwellers on earth whose names have not been written in the book of life from the foundation of the world will marvel to see the beast because it was and is not and is to come.

This calls for a mind with wisdom. Seven heads are seven mountains on which the woman is seated. There are also seven kings, five of whom have fallen.

[ 2 : 28 ] One is, the other has not yet come. And when he does come, he must remain only a little while. As for the beast, it was and is not. It's an eight. But it belongs to the seven and it goes to destruction.

The ten horns that you saw are ten kings who have not yet received royal power. But they are to receive authority as kings for one hour together with the beast. These are of one mind and hand over their power and authority to the beast.

They'll make war on the lamb. And the lamb will conquer them. For he is Lord of lords and king of kings. And those with him are called and chosen and faithful.

And the angel said to me, The waters that you saw where the prostitute is seated are peoples and multitudes and nations and languages. And the ten horns that you saw, they and the beast will hate the prostitute.

And they will make her desolate and naked and devour her flesh and burn her up with fire. For God has put it into their hearts to carry out his purpose by being of one mind and handing over their royal power to the beast until the words of God are fulfilled.

[ 3 : 41 ] And the woman that you saw is the great city that has dominion over the kings of the earth. After this I saw another angel coming down from heaven having great authority.

And the earth was made bright with his glory. And he called out with a mighty voice, Fallen! Fallen is Babylon the great. She has become a dwelling place for demons. A haunt for every unclean spirit.

A haunt for every unclean bird. A haunt for every unclean and detestable beast. For all nations have drunk the wine of the passion of her sexual immorality.

And the kings of the earth have committed immorality with her. And the merchants of the earth have grown rich from the power of her luxurious living. And then I heard another voice from heaven saying, Come out of her, my people.

Lest you take part in her sins. Lest you share in her plagues. For her sins are heaped high as heaven. And God has remembered her iniquities. Pay her back as she herself has paid back others.

[ 4 : 51 ] And repay her double for her deeds. Mix a double portion for her in the cup she mixed. As she glorified herself and lived in luxury. So give her a like measure of torment and mourning.

Since in her heart she says, I sit as queen. I am no widow. And mourning I shall never see. For this reason, her plagues will come in a single day.

Death and mourning and famine. And she'll be burned up with fire. For mighty is the Lord God who has judged her. And the kings of the earth who committed sexual immorality and lived in luxury with her will weep and wail over her when they see the smoke of her burning.

They'll stand afar off in fear of her torment and say, Alas, alas, you great city, you mighty city, Babylon. For in a single hour your judgment has come. And the merchants of the earth weep and mourn for her.

Since no one buys their cargo anymore. Cargo of gold, silver, jewels, pearls, fine linen, purple cloth, silk, scarlet cloth, all kinds of scented wool, all kinds of articles of ivory, all kinds of articles of costly wood, bronze, iron, and marble, cinnamon, spice, incense, myrrh, frankincense, wine, oil, fine flour, wheat, cattle and sheep, horses and chariots and slaves.

[ 6 : 13 ] That is, human souls. 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.

The merchants of these wares who gained their wealth from her will stand up. Far off in fear of her torment, weeping and mourning aloud, alas, alas for the great city that was clothed in fine linen and purple and scarlet, adorned with gold, with jewels and with pearls.

For in a single hour, all this wealth has been laid waste. And all shipmasters and seafaring men, soldiers, sailors, and all whose trade is on the sea, stood afar off and cried out, as they saw the smoke of her burning.

What city was like the great city? And they threw dust on their heads, and they wept and mourned, crying out, 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. Rejoice over her, O heaven, and you saints, and apostles, and prophets, for God has given judgment for you against her.

[ 7 : 39 ] And 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.

And the sound of harpists, of musicians, of flute players, and trumpeters, will be heard in you no more. And a craftsman of any craft will be found in you no more.

And the sound of the mill will be heard in you no more. And the light of a lamp will shine on you no more. And the voice of a bridegroom and bride will be heard in you no more. For your merchants were the great ones of the earth.

And all nations were deceived by your sorcery. And in her was found the blood of prophets, and of saints, and of all who had been slain on earth.

After this, I heard what seemed to be the loud voice of a great multitude in heaven, crying out, Hallelujah!

[ 8 : 49 ] Salvation and glory and power belong to our God, for His judgments are true and just. For He has judged the great prostitute who corrupted the earth with her immorality, and has avenged on her the blood of His saints.

And once more they cried out, Hallelujah! The smoke from her goes up forever and ever. And the twenty-four elders and the four living creatures fell down and worshipped God who was seated on

the throne, saying, Amen!

Hallelujah! Hallelujah! And from the throne came a voice, saying, Praise our God, all you His servants, you who fear Him, small and great.

Amen! May God bless to us His Word. Well, good evening. And as always, please have those chapters from Revelation open in front of you.

Chapters 17 and 18 and the beginning of chapter 19. Now, the central chapter of Revelation, which we've been considering over these past couple of months, have made for rather difficult reading, haven't they?

[10:15] Gloomy, hard. We've had to wrestle with the realities of the very real enemies of God and His people. And there are five enemies we've encountered.

There is the dragon himself, Satan. There are his two companions, the two beasts that we saw in chapter 13. They together form an unholy trinity.

So that's three of the enemies. The third, sorry, the fourth is the ungodly city of Babylon. Babylon. And the final enemy is all those who bear the mark of the beast.

And as we've considered the sober reality of these enemies to God and His people, it's felt like we've stumbled through a long and very dark tunnel. A tunnel which feels like it will never end.

But as we enter these final chapters of Revelation, as we enter chapter 17, 18, 19, 20, 21 and so on, it's as if we begin to see light beginning to dawn at the end of this tunnel.

[11:30] A glimmer of light grows. And by the time we reach the end of the book, it is in full blaze of sunshine. The darkness is banished. It will be no more.

Sunlight forever. That is where we're going. And one by one, these enemies of God are defeated. We saw last week the very sober reality and destiny of those who bear the mark of the beast for those who refuse to repent, who curse God despite His repeated warnings.

Judgment will fall. This evening we consider the destiny of Babylon. That's the subject matter of chapters 17 and 18. The two accomplices of the dragon, the two beasts, they are dealt with in chapter 19 and then Satan himself in chapter 20.

So one by one, these five enemies, we see their end. We read of their judgment. and tonight we're considering Babylon. We read about the fall of Babylon.

[12:47] And as we read this evening about the coming certain destruction of Babylon, it serves both as an encouragement and a warning to us. An encouragement because God will bring the ungodly world to justice.

the section concludes at the start of chapter 19 with rejoicing in heaven. Salvation and glory and power belong to our God.

Babylon will be no more. That is to be an encouragement, but it's also a warning for believers in every age from being swept up and enticed by the allure of Babylon.

Do not be sucked in is the warning. Consider the destiny of Babylon in this chapter. See Babylon for what it truly is.

It really is attractive, but it's deadly. Do not be sucked in by Babylon. There's an encouragement here. There's also a warning.

[13:53] Now, a word on Babylon before we delve in. Much of the Bible could be said to be about two cities. Jerusalem on the one hand and Babylon on the other.

Not limited to literal cities. They are representative. Jerusalem stands for the dwelling place of God, the people of God through all time and history.

Babylon, on the other hand, is the successor to Babel. It stands for the anti-God powers that oppress him Babylon. Babylon is the world under the sway and influence of Satan and his life.

Babylon is the sum total of all who do not belong to God throughout history. And so Babylon is therefore a past reality, a present reality, and for a period, a future reality, but it will come to an end. its form may change through the ages, but its essence remains. Babylon is alive and active in every age.

[15:02] The world is represented by one of these two cities. And in the end, all will seem to be a citizen of one or the other.

every person who's lived on this planet will either be a citizen of Jerusalem or a citizen of Babylon. Jerusalem, the great bride of Christ, and Babylon, as we see in our chapter tonight, the great prostitute.

At the end of Revelation, we will hear of the new Jerusalem. That is the whole international people of God in their final glory coming out of heaven, adorned like a bride for her husband, the completed church of Christ, ready for the marriage supper of the Lamb.

That's the destiny of Jerusalem. That's the glorious reality of all who belong to Jesus. But in our chapters tonight, we do not read of Jerusalem apart from the very end, but really we read about Babylon, not of the bride, but the prostitutes.

And whilst the heavenly Jerusalem, the city of God abides forever, for eternity, Babylon will meet its end unavoidably.

[16:21] And that is the message of these chapters. Now, as I mentioned last week, these final chapters of Revelation, they are a detailed unveiling, an unpacking of what we saw in brief last week.

So remember last week it was the seven bowls of God's wrath being poured out on the world. And the seventh bowl of God's wrath was the final judgment of God.

And we saw back in chapter 16, have a look at chapter 16, verse 19, we read these words, verse 19, and God remembered Babylon, the great, to make her drain the cup of the wine of the fury of his wrath.

So that is a summary statement of the judgment upon Babylon. And what we have in brief there in chapter 16 is now expanded. We get a much more detailed understanding, a vision, of what is to come for Babylon.

Babylon. So what was in brief in 16 is expanded in chapter 17 and 18. We see in these chapters the destiny of Babylon, the judgment upon Babylon, the victory of God over Babylon.

[17:39] So there's a lot of ground to cover. We've got three, almost three chapters to get through. And we're not going to get into every detail. So if you've got questions about these chapters, come and chat to me. And I will try my best to answer any questions you may have.

But we're trying to get the broad sweep of these chapters tonight. We're going to consider in three broad sections. Chapter 17, we have Babylon described. And then chapter 18, we see Babylon destroyed.

And then chapter 19, the first few verses, rejoicing at Babylon's demise. So that's our brief outline for this evening. So first then, chapter 17.

And here we have Babylon described. Look at verse 1. Then one of the seven angels who had the seven bowls came and said to me, that is to John, come, I will show you the judgment of the great prostitute who is seated on many waters.

So he's brought to see the judgment upon the great prostitute. And verse 3 gives a summary of what John sees. Look with me again at verse 3.

[18:50] And he carried me away in the spirit into a wilderness and I saw a woman sitting on a scarlet beast that was full of blasphemous names. And I had seven heads and ten horns.

So there are two key figures in this vision. There's the woman who, as we're told in verse 5, is Babylon the great. So there's the woman and there's the beast that she is sat upon.

The scarlet beast with the seven heads and ten horns. The woman Babylon is the focus of the first six verses and the beast is the focus from verse 7 to the end of the chapter. They are, as we'll see, very closely connected.

They are enemies together against the Lord and his people. But as it turns out in the end, they're actually enemies of one another. Well, we're going to consider the beast first and then we'll come back to the woman because, as we'll see, the beast is really the one who pulls the strings in this particular relationship.

Now, the beast, from verse 7 on, is really the same beast that we encountered back in chapter 13. Remember those two beasts that accompany the great dragon? Well, this is the first of those beasts which arises out of the sea in chapter 13, verse 1.

[20:12] That beast with ten horns and seven heads. And this beast, you might remember, symbolizes all those who inflict persecution upon God's people all through the ages.

And especially as it's manifested in government, state-sponsored persecution of God and his people, the great world empires all down through the ages.

Now, we're told about the origins of this beast and its destiny. Look at verse 8. The beast that you saw was and is not and is about to rise from the bottomless pit and go to destruction.

Now, the first half of that verse, a slightly strange language, isn't it? The beast who was and is not and is. And that is language that actually echoes the language used of Jesus himself in chapter 1, verse 4.

The one who is and who was and who is to come. So it's a distortion of a description of Jesus that we saw earlier in the book. And so this beast, it will have the appearance of something like Christ. [ 21 : 25 ] It's a, there's something Christ-like about it but it's a counterfeit. And even though this beast has been struck the fatal blow through Jesus' victory on the cross, he is still somewhat active in this age.

And that's what we saw back in chapter 13. Despite being injured, it carries on. The final death blow has not yet fallen. That's still to come. But it will come.

But for now, for a time, this beast has seemingly recovered and it gains the following. Look at the second half of verse 8. The dwellers on earth whose names have not been written in the book of life and the foundation of the world will marvel to see the beast because it was and is not and is to come.

And that is the repeated pattern throughout history. Time and time again, this beast, manifesting itself in world powers, will abuse and persecute the church.

It will rise but it will fall again. Every world empire will rise and fall. His destiny, remember, halfway through verse 8, is destruction.

[ 22 : 41 ] We see the origin and the destiny of this beast. It's from the pit and its destiny is destruction. And the following verses seem to tie this beast to the oppressive Roman regime of John's own day.

Now, it's not that the beast was limited to Rome but that was how John was encountering it. As he saw this vision, at that time, it was Rome that was persecuting the church. Certainly, the beast was active through that period but it's been active in every age in different ways all through history. Look at verse 9. This calls for a mind of wisdom. The seven heads are seven mountains on which the woman is seated. And that reference to seven mountains, seven hills, that's traditionally how Rome is described.

Seven hills. A friend of mine who recently went to do the Rome Marathon hadn't realized that seven hills was a thing in Rome. It was a hard marathon, I think. But seven hills, that was a reference to Rome but it's also symbolic.

We know through Revelation that the number seven is representative. It's not limited to Rome, it's broader than that. It's a significant number through the book.

[ 24 : 00 ] And in verse 10, the heads of the seven beasts are said to be seven kings. It's not a literal number of kings again but it denotes a complete number. The total number of whatever rulers are at that particular time.

With Rome, it was whatever Roman empires have been ruling. a whole succession of them. And you could get really bogged down in the second half of verse 10 if you try to start working out, okay, so five kings have fallen, which one is yet to come?

You can get really bogged down in trying to work out. I've read many commentaries which try and identify which king is which emperor and so on. You get very confused. The point is not to try and work out who is who but actually the point is we're getting towards the end.

five have gone. There's one at the moment and there's one to come. In other words, the end is imminent. The end is coming. Christ will return, have hope.

Looking on to verse 14, it says of the ten kings, they will make war on the lamb but the lamb will conquer them for he is the lord of lords and king of kings and those with him are called, chosen and faithful followers.

[ 25 : 17 ] Jesus is in the end victorious over this beast. He's victorious over his followers. And just notice verse 15 to the end.

It's worth just reading this because we see here the inherent chaos and disunity that exists in the anti-God worlds.

Look at verse 15 and the angel said to me, the waters that you saw where the prostitute is seated are peoples and multitudes and nations and languages.

And the ten horns that you saw, they and the beast will hate the prostitute. They will make her desolate and naked and devour her flesh and burn her up with fire. For God has put it into their hearts to carry out his purpose by being of one mind and handing over their royal power to the

beast until the words of God fulfilled.

And the woman that you saw is the great city that has dominion over the kings of the earth. Do you see what it's saying? The beast and Babylon will turn against each other.

[ 26 : 31 ] Evil is intrinsically chaotic and ununified. and a house divided against itself cannot stand. Now the beast and Babylon may well be unified in their opposition to God but that's it.

They are otherwise totally ununified. The beast will devour the prostitute. God causes his enemies to destroy one another.

As we look around our world as we observe the present manifestations of Babylon the ideological lies regarding all sorts of things human sexuality gender life itself all those ideologies they are not as powerful or as stable as they appear.

They contain within themselves the seeds of their own destruction. They are not stable. They cannot stand. Well that is the beast upon which Lady Babylon sits.

That beast is one of the companions of the devil himself. it is all that anti-God's power through the world. Well let's zoom back a bit to the first few verses and consider the woman the prostitute Babylon who sits on the beast.

[ 28 : 00 ] Now notice verse 3 the location where John sees this vision it's the wilderness and this is the wilderness into which God's people have fled to.

Way back in chapter 12 we see the radiant woman that is symbolic for the people of God representing the church she fled into the wilderness when the dragon appeared in chapter 12 the woman fled God's people fled into the wilderness and that is symbolically where God's people are residing.

But this woman the woman of chapter 17 Babylon who rides upon the back of the beast has pursued the church into the wilderness and her aim as she goes out into the wilderness is to seduce God's people away from their saviour.

That is the whole aim and purpose of Babylon. She is dressed to that end. Look at verse 4 the woman was arrayed in purple and scarlet and adorned with gold and jewels and pearls holding in her hand a golden cup.

The image is a deeply powerful impressive image alluring. Notice even John's reaction look at verse 6 when I saw her I marveled greatly.

[ 29 : 22 ] He marvels not in the sense that he's approving but this is an awesome sight this is an impressive sight an awesome sight.

Babylon looks good. Babylon leaves an impression. Babylon is really attractive alluring magnetic. Babylon's described as the great prostitute verse 1 as mother of prostitutes verse 5.

In other words Babylon's whole purpose is to allure and tempt and seduce God's people into unfaithfulness. Look at verse 2 with her the kings of the earth have committed sexual immorality and the wine of whose sexual immorality the dwellers on earth have become drunk.

Babylon is deeply and deceptively attractive of course it is. Seduction is one of Satan's only weapons and to use it to the absolute maximum in order to lure away God's people.

Babylon wants to lure God's people from faithfulness to Jesus to abandon him to commit spiritual adultery. That is the purpose and aim of Babylon.

[ 30 : 56 ] But it's only a superficial attractiveness. There is no substance. Well there is substance but it's toxic.

She holds a golden cup in her hand but notice the contents. Second half of verse 4 in her hands a golden cup full of abominations and the impurities of her sexual immorality.

You see a cup like that a golden cup looks very attractive. For something to be contained in such a precious vessel it must be worthy mustn't it?

If it's worthy of being contained in such a vessel it must be good. Yet it contains nothing but abominations. Its contents do nothing but harm those who drink it.

This cup contains whatever deceits and half truths Satan deems effected to turn believers away from the Lord Jesus. Babylon will promise you things that are in fact too good to be true which cost you far more than you were ever willing to pay.

[ 32 : 09 ] The attractiveness of being in the good books of Babylon is a powerful pool. It promises wealth and acceptance but it will cost your allegiance to Jesus.

Remember that Babylon which looks impressive is at the same time drunk on the blood of the martyrs end of verse six. Babylon wields a fierce stick as well as an attractive gold goblet.

Friends we do need to see Babylon for who she truly is. The worldly powers political and corporate and social they will seek to draw you away from faithfulness to Christ.

They will seduce and promise you riches all the time and all around us we're being enticed by the world every day we see hundreds of adverts convincing us to buy things we don't need promising things we can't really be delivered and all the time our gaze is being directed towards the immediate not the eternal to the trivial not the ultimate to believing lies and letting go of truth that is that is what Babylon will do anything to draw you away as well as seduce Babylon will intimidate and coerce and sometimes kill anything to get God's people to let go of Christ compromise or perish Babylon will use both those things to try to get you let go of

Jesus we need to see Babylon for who she really is and she's pictured here as a prostitute drunk on the blood of the martyrs who is in league with Satan himself chapter 17 exposes Babylon and we're now about to be shown the destiny of Babylon and her destiny is destruction just look on to chapter 18 we see here that Babylon is destroyed we see here in this chapter that Babylon its destruction is absolutely certain hear the thunderous words of verse one after John saw this I saw another angel coming down from heaven having great authority and the earth was made bright with his glory and he called out with a mighty voice fallen fallen as Babylon the great look on to the end of the chapter verse 21 then a mighty angel took up a stone like a great millstone and throw it into the sea saying so will

[ 35 : 15 ] Babylon the great city be thrown down with violence and will be found no more and the sound of harpists and musicians of flute players and trumpeters will be heard in you no more no more no more again and again you get the refrain no more Babylon will be no more why why is Babylon to be destroyed well verse 2 tells us she has become a dwelling place for demons verse 3 for all nations have drunk the wine of the passion of her sexual immorality and the kings of earth have committed immorality with her and the merchants of the earth have grown rich from the power of a luxurious living it is her immorality her idolatry her love of luxury that warrants her destruction and the destruction is right verse 6 pay her back as she herself has paid back others and repay her double for all her deeds and it's double in the sense that the punishment is perfectly matched to the crime it's like a double image it's not a doubling but it's a double image it's a fair punishment for what has happened and what are the judgments on

Babylon well verse 9 and following tell us it is a removal of everything that it strived after instead of luxury in its place is poverty and it's the loss of this wealth and luxury that the residents of Babylon mourn over that's the substance of this middle section of the chapter where we have three lamentations voiced by the kings the merchants and the navigators of the seas all the treasure of Babylon which has enticed the hearts of men in one hour is gone notice verse 10 and a single hour your judgment has come again verse 17 for in a single hour all this wealth has been laid waste see all of the material things that people have pinned their hopes on put their lives on is gone worthless useless when it comes to the ultimate mass of time and eternity all that

Babylon latches its hopes on all that Babylon holds out is gone and it's notable that every area of our earthly existence is caught up in the destruction the things that the various people are mourning about in these middle verses of this chapter they cover every aspect of life every major domain of our world is caught up in the destruction the mineral kingdom the things that we mine from the earth gold and silver gone the plant kingdom linens and silk the animal kingdom the kingdom of men all these things are swept up all will be brought to destruction in the end Babylon will fall and the result is to quote one writer is that when Babylon perishes the economic chaos is complete the world of the unbeliever on which he has pinned his hopes and built his trust collapses and whilst this is ultimately true at the end of history and Babylon will ultimately and finally fall it is also apparent in every era isn't it of human history

Babylon takes many forms throughout the ages every human empire every major power every superpower every manifestation of Babylon turns to dust and so what we see here happening at the end of time happens in miniature all the time the prosperous west which we've grown up with that will not last for eternity that will crumble and so the question is for you and I where is your trust where is your trust it must not be in Babylon hence the warning in verse 4 then I heard another voice from heaven saying come out of her my people lest you take part in her sins lest you share in her plagues for her sins are heaped high as heaven and God has remembered her iniquities we really do need to grasp the destiny of Babylon because the trappings of

Babylon have derailed many in the past the wealth and the luxuries of the world are very enticing whatever it is that Babylon holds out whatever it is that begins to grip our hearts it's very enticing but the thing is we cannot serve both God and money we cannot serve both God and Babylon it will be one or the other we cannot be truly in the world and truly in Christ at the same time you can't do it which is why you get this warning to come out verse 4 come out of her my people come out of Babylon lest you take part in her sins so consider what are the things what are the ideas what are the things that our hearts truly desire after what is it you really want whose approval are we really seeking what are the actual dreams that you hold for your children what are they actually is it the things of this world that will inevitably and unavoidably disappoint and turn to dust or is it eternal treasures which will never spoil or fade which is it the things of this world glitter for now when they really do glitter

[ 42 : 40 ] Babylon really is attractive but the things of the world to come do not glitter now at least not as Babylon would assess them to be they are often despised now but we must make the choice are we citizens of Babylon or Jerusalem which is it and reading this chapter ought to make that choice pretty clear our roots must be sunk deeply into the heavenly Jerusalem not that we're to be separate from this world but we are to be separate in it in the world but not of it and that means we must daily pick up our cross daily we must choose to follow Christ and not the idols of the world around us daily we must decide where our deepest allegiances rest what is it we're truly serving who are we truly serving

Babylon or Jerusalem and this chapter urges us it pleads with us it pleads with you that it would be Jerusalem not Babylon you see the citizens of Babylon will one day utter these words look with me at verse 14 and these are words that bring tears to your eyes are they not the citizens of Babylon will one day say the fruit for which your soul longed for has gone from you and all your delicacies and your splendors are lost to you never to be found again see Babylon cannot deliver what it promises it can't do it the career for which your soul longed for has gone from you never to be found again the lifestyle and comfort which your soul longed for has gone from you never to be found again the social standing the social pleasures the sexual pleasures of which your soul longed for have gone from you never to be found again you see

Babylon will be destroyed and that for those who belong to Jerusalem is met by rejoicing that's the last thing we see in this section in these first verses of chapter 19 there's rejoicing at Babylon's demise look at 19 verse 1 after this I heard what seemed to be a loud voice of a great multitude in heaven crying out hallelujah salvation and glory and power belong to our God for his judgments are true and just for he has judged the great prostitutes who corrupted the earth with her immorality and has avenged on her the blood of his servants and this growing volume of praise in these verses has arisen from the call back in chapter 18 verse 20 where we're told rejoice over her oh heaven and you saints and apostles and prophets for God has given judgment for you against her it is a celebration and jubilation in heaven over the victory of

Christ over Babylon Babylon who sought to seduce and derail God's people through all the ages Babylon who sought to derail God's people through immorality Babylon who martyred God's people through the ages Babylon has been brought to justice and there's a passage here full of rejoicing but it's the rejoicing of victory rejoicing in relation to the triumph of righteousness over unrighteousness no longer will Babylon shed the blood of God's people no longer will Babylon corrupt the earth peace will reign justice will be done and this is the glorious future that awaits Christ's people this vision of the beginning of chapter 19 this will endure as Babylon fades into ancient history

Jerusalem endures Jerusalem abides forever and it's a glorious future fix your eyes here plant your roots here because this is the destiny of God's people Christians who live with the realities of these chapters front and center of their minds will glow with the radiance of Christ as we fix our minds on these realities we will be enabled to live here and now in the midst of Babylon in faithfulness to Christ I think it was C.S.

[ 48 : 06 ] Lewis who said that those who make most impact on this world have been most consumed with the world to come we are to live today in the midst of Babylon with the destiny of Babylon fixed on our minds with the destiny of Jerusalem fixed on our minds personally individually but as a church we are to live with these realities front and center and a church most consumed with the world to come a church most consumed with the destiny of Jerusalem as we see here will prove to be a powerful institution not a popular one in Babylon's eyes but a powerful evangelistic

force that draws people in that sees people won for eternity even as we live in the midst of Babylon we build for that which will last

Babylon will in the end fall so don't don't follow the beast don't follow Babylon who rides on the beast's back don't follow the great dragon he has already been defeated Babylon will fall so follow the one who is truth listen to him follow him do not be seduced by Babylon for she will be no more that's the destiny of Babylon Christ and his bride abide forever let those realities sink in and live now in light of those realities let's pray oh father god it's hard it's hard for us to understand these things to understand the reality of things not yet seen but lord would you give us ears to hear your words of promise to hear of your words the destiny of humanity and keep us from living merely by what we see and observe with our eyes but rather to be those who live by faith trusting your promises trusting that Christ will return and bring all things to justice so please help us to live in hope as we wait for our king who will surely come we ask it in Jesus name amen