**Revelation 17-18**

Introduction

I. Revelation is a call to remain loyal to Christ

A. Citizenship (Philippians 3:18-20). Are you a citizen of Babylon or the New Jerusalem

B. Marriage (2 Corinthians 11:2-3). Do you belong to the prostitute or the bride?

II. Where is your loyalty?

A. Much of your heart is given to worldly things that when Christ returns will mean nothing at all?

B. Where do you go to get your needs for security, purpose, comfort, and satisfaction met? God or the world?

The Passage

I. Babylon’s Reign (ch. 17)

A. She represents the great city that rules over the people of the world (v. 15, 18)

Those original readers would naturally think of Rome (v. 9)

B. Her name is Babylon (v. 5)

Beginning with Babel and the OT city of Babylon, that name represents the worldiness of a world that turns its back on God and pursues its own glory, beauty, fame, and wealth

C. She is a prostitute (v. 5)

 “The world should relate to God as a wife does to a husband, in pure devotion. But the world has forgotten God, betrayed him, sold herself to anyone who will pay. The world is a whore. Every human government that does not honor Christ is prostituting itself to agendas and worldviews and national interests that are nothing but pimps and customers. This description of the world as a prostitute reveals the discrepancy between what the world was made to do and what it has done instead.” --James Hamilton

D. Her description (v. 3-6)

1. She is riding the beast (v. 3)

She is carried by political/military powers manipulated by the dragon

2. She is dressed extravagantly (v. 4)

-18:7: In her heart she boasts, “I sit as queen; I am not a widow, and I will never mourn.”

3. She is holding a cup full of abominations that intoxicate people (v. 4, v. 2)

 4. She is drinking the blood of the saints (v. 6)

E. Roman in the first century

 1. It was outwardly impressive (powerful, beautiful, extravagant, alluring)

2. It was inwardly corrupt (sexual immorality, overindulgence, violent, and unjust). See Rev 18:12-13

 F. The spirit of Babylon is alive and well today

II. Babylon’s Fall (ch. 18)

 A. The very force that brought her to power will be her demise (17:16)

B. A doom song is sung (see 18:2, 18:21-24)

C. Her fall takes place in one day/hour (see v. 8, 17, 19)

D. Some people celebrate her fall (19:1-3) and some mourn her fall (18:9, 11, 17)

Conclusion

I. Where do you look to meet your needs? God or the world?

Security: world or God?

 Approval: world or God?

 Pleasure: world or God?

 Purpose/significance: world or God?

When you’re sad/lonely where do you go? world or God?

II. When Babylon falls, will you be rejoicing or mourning?

Consider the things that won’t last past Christ’s return. Don’t let your heart be too attached to those things

III. What do we do if we find our hearts too attached to the world?

A. Hear v. 2: “Fallen! Fallen Is Babylon!”

Sometimes the world and its values seem so strong, and we need to be reminded that they will come down one day

B. Hear the command of v. 4: “Come out of her!”

We need to do what we need to do to break the hold the world has on our hearts

-May involve a change in attitude

-May involve drastic action to free ourselves from certain things

C. Hear Jesus’ call: “Come to me to get your deepest needs met”

1. The world can only offer us cheap substitutes of security, significance, and satisfaction, but Jesus can offer the real thing. He wants to give us true life.

2. “It would seem that Our Lord finds our desires not too strong, but too weak. We are half-hearted creatures, fooling about with drink and sex and ambition when infinite joy is offered us, like an ignorant child who wants to go on making mud pies in a slum because he cannot imagine what is meant by the offer of a holiday at the sea. We are far too easily pleased.” --C.S. Lewis

**Discussion Questions**

We often look to the world/Babylon instead of to God to satisfy our needs (our needs for security, significance, comfort, and satisfaction). But the call of this passage is to “come out of her” (18:4). Where are you going to the world to satisfy your needs and what would it look like to come out of her and go to Jesus instead to meet that need?

One day Babylon (ie. all the worldliness of the world that is not in line with Christ’s kingdom) will fall, and Christ’s kingdom alone will stand. Identify some things we can pursue and live for today that will have eternal significance beyond this world. Is there any one of those that you feel encouraged/inspired to pursue more intentionally at this time?

The prostitute Babylon is dressed in expensive clothes and jewelry (see 17:4). Likewise, the citizens of Rome lived lavish lifestyles as evidenced by the list of materials imported to Rome (see 18:11-13). How do we discern when our material lifestyles are more lavish and indulgent than is healthy or faithful to God? What litmus tests or questions can help us discern where we are on that issue?

Consider the C.S. Lewis quote mentioned on Sunday: “It would seem that Our Lord finds our desires not too strong, but too weak. We are half-hearted creatures, fooling about with drink and sex and ambition when infinite joy is offered us, like an ignorant child who wants to go on making mud pies in a slum because he cannot imagine what is meant by the offer of a holiday at the sea. We are far too easily pleased.” How do you respond to that quote?