



The Judgment of the Great Prostitute

Revelation 17

1. The Prostitute (verses 1-6)
2. The Mystery (verses 7-14)
3. The Judgment (verses 15-18)

I want for you to think about the opening chapters of the Bible. Genesis chapter 1 tells the story of the six days of creation. On day 1, The heavens and the earth were made (and light). On day 2, God made an expanse in the sky that separated the waters above from the waters below. On day 3, God made the plants. On day 4, God made the sun, moon and stars. On day 5, God made the fish to swarm in the sea, and the birds to swarm in the sky. On day 6, God made the land animals and he made man in his own image, "male and female he created them" (Genesis 1:27).

Genesis chapter 2 begins with telling us how God rested on the seventh day. It continues on to focus in on the sixth day of creation, in which God made man. We read about the details. He made man from the dust of the ground (Genesis 2:7). He placed him in the garden and gave him the task of working it and keeping it (Genesis 2:15). He parades all of the animals before man, that he might name them. When there wasn't an animal fit to help him, God made the woman from the side of the man (Genesis 2:22).

All of Genesis chapter 2 is an expansion of the second half of the sixth day of creation as recorded in Genesis chapter 1. Now, this morning, as we come to our text, we are going to find something similar.

Last week we looked at Revelation 16, in which the bowls of God's wrath were being poured out upon the earth. These bowls are the final judgement of God upon the earth. But we see more judgement coming in chapters 17 and 18. Now, it's not that Revelation 17 and 18 are telling of more judgment beyond the bowls. Rather, it's that Revelation 17 and 18 are expanding upon the final bowl of judgement. In other words, just as Genesis 2 expands upon a detail of Genesis 1, so also does Revelation 17 and 18 expand in detail of what we saw in Revelation 16.

I believe that the particular detail that will be expanded comes in verse 19. So, open your Bibles to Revelation chapter 16. We read in verse 19:

Revelation 16:19

The great city was split into three parts, and the cities of the nations fell, and God remembered Babylon the great, to make her drain the cup of the wine of the fury of his wrath.

Chapters 17 and 18 are about God's wrath that is poured upon Babylon. In chapter 17, Babylon is pictured as a prostitute. In chapter 18, Babylon is describes as a city. This morning, we will be looking at Babylon, the prostitute. We will be looking at the judgment of this prostitute. The story of her judgement is told in Revelation 17, which is our text. The title of my message this morning is, "The Judgement of the Great Prostitute." You can see this exact phrase in verse 1.

Revelation 17:1-18

Then one of the seven angels who had the seven bowls 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, 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. And on her forehead was written a name of mystery: "Babylon the great, mother of prostitutes and of earth's abominations." And I saw the woman, drunk with the blood of the saints, the blood of the martyrs of Jesus.

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 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: the seven heads are seven mountains on which the woman is seated; they are also seven kings, five of whom have fallen, one is, the other has not yet come, and when he does come he must remain only a little while. As for the beast that was and is not, it is an eighth but it belongs to the seven, and it goes to destruction. And 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 they hand over their power and authority to the beast. They will 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. 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. And the woman that you saw is the great city that has dominion over the kings of the earth."

My first point this morning comes from verses 1-6.

1. The Prostitute (verses 1-6)

This is what the angel summons John to see.

Revelation 17:1

Then one of the seven angels who had the seven bowls came and said to me, "Come, I will show you the judgment of the great prostitute who is seated on many waters,

The first thing that we notice about this prostitute is that she is "seated on many waters." In verse 15, we are told what these waters represent.

Revelation 17:15

And the angel said to me, "The waters that you saw, where the prostitute is seated, are peoples and multitudes and nations and languages.

This is what makes the prostitute, "Great." It's not that she is good, and not that she is beautiful. She represents "peoples and multitudes and nations and languages." In other words, this prostitute is the world. In particular, this prostitute is all of the peoples of the world who live in all of the nations of the world, and who speak all of the languages of the world. So when you think about this "great prostitute," you should think about China and India and Peru and France and Nigeria and Madagascar and the United States.

Further description of this prostitute comes in verse 2.

Revelation 17:2

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.

Now, because we know who this prostitute is, we can rightly understand what is meant by verse 2. Sexual immorality and drunkenness are metaphors to describe the seductive influences of the world, which are contrary to the ways of God. If you know your Old Testament, you know that God has often used the metaphor of sexual immorality to describe the waywardness of the world.

In Isaiah 23, Tyre, the sinful, coastal city, is described as singing the song of a prostitute. In Nahum 3:4, the city of Nineveh condemned for all of their whorings of the prostitute. Even Jerusalem, God's city, was described as a prostitute. "How the faithful city has become a prostitute" (Isaiah 1:21).

Entire books of the Old Testament are centered around this metaphor of Israel being unfaithful to God, their true lover. I'm thinking primarily of Hosea. Hosea was to take this prostitute as a wife. She bore him children and then returned to her life of prostitution. Yet, Hosea loved her still. Hosea's marriage was like God's marriage to Israel. God took this sinful people and loved them as any man loves his wife. But she proved unfaithful, pursuing after other gods, much like a prostitute would. But God loved her still, and called her back.

This imagery of the nations of the world being a prostitute is not foreign to Scripture. It describes the waywardness and error of the world to pursue their own pleasures in forsaking their true love, which is described metaphorically here in verse 2 as sexual pleasure and drunkenness, to which a prostitute pursues. This prostitute is the world pursuing their sinful pleasures rather than being faithful to the one true God. They pursue the entertainment of the games and the shows, rather than the worship of God. They look to the beauty of nature and the world in their travels, rather than looking to the beauty of God. They pursue their power and influence and glory, rather than giving all glory and honor to God!

The world is like a great prostitute. Which, by the way, is of great contrast to the true followers of Christ, who are the bride of Christ! Who seeks to be faithful in marriage, and has one true love- Jesus! We will see this bride revealed in Revelation 19. All that is true of a great marriage. The love of the bride for the groom, the love of the groom for the bride. This is true of the church. Jesus loves us, and we love him! That's the heart and passion of the church. It is the bride of Christ. The church is not to be a prostitute, but to love the Lord in a right relationship.

This morning, we are not considering those who are faithful to the Lord. Rather, we are considering the world, "the peoples and multitudes and nations and languages" (verse 15), who have demonstrated themselves to be like a prostitute. Let's continue on.

Revelation 17:3

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 it had seven heads and ten horns.

Let's first talk about John. We see him being "carried away in the Spirit into a wilderness." There are several times in the book of Revelation when John has been summoned to look at something, and then taken "in the Spirit" to a place to see it.

Way back in Revelation 4, we read this in the first verse: "After this I looked, and behold, a door standing open in heaven! And the first voice,

which I had heard speaking to me like a trumpet, said, "Come up here, and I will show you what must take place after this." There is the summons. And then, in the next verse, we see John being transported "in the Spirit" elsewhere. At once I was in the Spirit, and behold, a throne stood in heaven, with one seated on the throne" (Revelation 4:1-2).

This is where we have been since chapter 4. We have been in the heaven, looking upon all that happens there. Now when I say "heaven," I don't mean the place of eternal bliss. I simply mean the spiritual realm. In that spiritual realm, John is given a vision of what is really happening in this world. What is really happening is that God is on the throne.

We see that in chapters 4 and 5, where "myriads and myriads and thousands of thousands" of angelic beings are worshiping the Lord. What is really happening in heaven is that the judgments that are coming (and will come) from there upon the world. We see this with the opening of the seals in chapter 6, the blowing of the trumpets in chapters 8 and 9, and the pouring out of the bowls in chapter 16. What is really happening is a spiritual battle between God and the devil and his minions: the beast and the false prophet. We read about these things in chapters 12 and 13. God is sealing and protecting his people for the onslaughts of the world against them.

That's where we have been in Revelation: in the heavenly realm. And now, this angel is summoning John to a different place, to a wilderness. This isn't the last time that John will be summoned and moved to a different place. "Then came one of the seven angels who had the seven bowls full of the seven last plagues and spoke to me, saying, 'Come, I will show you the Bride, the wife of the Lamb'" (Revelation 21:9). There is the summons. And then, in the next verse, we see John being transported "in the Spirit" elsewhere. "And he carried me away in the Spirit to a great, high mountain, and showed me the holy city Jerusalem coming down out of heaven from God" (Revelation 21:10).

John was transported to see the "New Jerusalem." There have been many who have taken these transports as the broad outline of Revelation.^[1] In chapters 1-3 we see the first vision, when John was "in the Spirit" on the Island of Patmos (Rev. 1:9). In chapters 4-16 we see the second vision, when John saw much that is going on behind the scenes in the history (and future) of the world. In chapters 17-20 we see the third vision, when John is taken into the wilderness to see finality of judgment in detail. In chapters 21-22 we see the fourth and final vision, when John sees the New Jerusalem, the final destination of the people of God.

In verse 3, we see John "carried away in the Spirit into a wilderness" where he saw

Revelation 17:3

a woman sitting on a scarlet beast that was full of blasphemous names, and it had seven heads and ten horns.

This verse draws me to think of the wild west where cowboys ride upon their horses. They are seated high upon their beasts. They are in complete control of their beasts, as they trot along.

We have seen this seven headed beast with ten horns before. Do you remember Revelation 13?

Revelation 13:1-4

And I saw a beast rising out of the sea, with ten horns and seven heads, with ten diadems on its horns and blasphemous names on its heads. And the beast that I saw was like a leopard; its feet were like a bear's, and its mouth was like a lion's mouth. And to it the dragon gave his power and his throne and great authority. One of its heads seemed to have a mortal wound, but its mortal wound was healed, and the whole earth marveled as they followed the beast. And they worshiped the dragon, for he had given his authority to the beast, and they worshiped the beast, saying, "Who is like the beast, and who can fight against it?"

This prostitute is riding on the back of the power of the beast. We will see later what the heads and horns of this beast represent. Here, we can simply point out how the beast is said to have great power, against whom none can fight. This is consistent with the vision of the prostitute who is "seated upon many waters" (verse 1), who practices her trade with the kings of the earth (verse 2) and is in complete control of "the peoples and multitudes and nations and languages" of the world.

Verse 4 describes this woman further.

Revelation 17:4

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.

This verse speaks of the beauty of this prostitute. She is wearing expensive, royal clothes, suitable for kings and dignitaries and wealthy people. She is adorned with precious jewels, helpful to seduce her lovers. With her front and center is her sin, pictured as being in a golden cup. This cup may look nice on the outside as it is a fancy golden chalice. But inside the cup lies the sin that will bring downfall to this prostitute.

The book of Proverbs describes such a woman, "whose lips drip honey, whose speech is smoother than oil. But in the end she is bitter as wormwood, and sharp as a two-edged sword. Her feet go down to death" (Proverbs 5:3-5). This is a picture of the pleasure of the world. Attractive and seductive, but in the end leading to death. Note again in this appearance the metaphors of sin. The sexual immorality of the prostitute and the drunkenness which comes through the drink.

We see more about this prostitute in verse 5.

Revelation 17:5

And on her forehead was written a name of mystery: "Babylon the great, mother of prostitutes and of earth's abominations."

Verse 5 gives us the identity of this prostitute. This great prostitute being identified as "Babylon the great." This is the same Babylon that we

will see next week in Revelation 18, which will fall. I think that this helps to give us a clue as to how to interpret all of Revelation. Because, in John's day, "Babylon" was not the power of the world. It was Rome that was in control. John was on the Island of Patmos as a political prisoner of Rome, not Babylon. Babylon had been destroyed by the Persians, centuries before John even lived.

Yet here in Revelation, John sees the future (and final) judgment as coming upon Babylon. At this point, there are two options to understand this. First of all, there is a literalistic understanding that "Babylon" will be restored to power in the future, so that it might be destroyed in accordance with Revelation 18. Or, Babylon is merely the symbol used to picture the powers of the world.

I think that all commentators understand the later view to be correct. Babylon is the picture of power that will be judged. John may have understood this as Rome, the worldwide power of his day. We may understand this as the United States, China, and Russia. Not that America and China are in the Bible, but as world powers that pursue their pleasures, we fulfill all that Babylon represents.

In other words, the prostitute here is a picture of the world, against the Lord and against his Christ (Psalm 2:2). This is the point of verse 5, Babylon is the

Revelation 17:5

... mother of prostitutes and of earth's abominations.

Babylon is the picture of the "mother" of sin. That is, the source of sin. Babylon was in the garden, seducing Adam and Eve to sin. Babylon was Egypt, holding the Hebrews in slavery. Babylon was Assyria, who came and destroyed Israel. Babylon was Rome. Babylon is with us today. "Babylon" is the source of all of the "earth's abominations" that will be judged. She is pictured here in chapter 17 as "the great prostitute." That's the best way to understand this picture of the prostitute. It's the world that is against God.

We see in verse 6 how anti-God she is. She is against the people of God.

Revelation 17:6

And I saw the woman, drunk with the blood of the saints, the blood of the martyrs of Jesus.

This prostitute seduces the world into her pleasures and she murders all of those who resist her will. She delights in doing so. That's the picture of "drunkenness." Here we see the call of Revelation. It's the call of endurance, overcoming the world.

If you are faithful to the Lord, you will be hated by the world. Did not Jesus warn us of this? Jesus told his disciples what John records in John 15:18-20, "If the world hates you, know that it has hated me before it hated you. If you were of the world, the world would love you as its own; but because you are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, therefore the world hates you. Remember the word that I said to you: 'A servant is not greater than his master.' If they persecuted me, they will also persecute you. If they kept my word, they will also keep yours."

This is what we see in Revelation 17. We see the world hating those who follow Jesus. Here in Revelation, it means death. Revelation is calling us to be "faithful unto death" (Revelation 2:10). We may not be seeing this today. But John's original reader heard of it. There are some places in the world who are seeing it. We may experience it in the future as well.

This is how you understand Revelation: It is written to a persecuted people, who need to be assured that faithfulness to Jesus is the path of blessing. "Here is a call for the endurance of the saints, those who keep the commandments of God and their faith in Jesus. And I heard a voice from heaven saying, 'Write this: Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord from now on.' 'Blessed indeed,' says the Spirit, 'that they may rest from their labors, for their deeds follow them'" (Revelation 14:12-13)!

The way of the curse is to follow after the prostitute. To follow in the ways of the world. The woman will be destroyed in the end, but those who follow the Lord (even unto death) will be blessed! Those who trust in Jesus and follow in his ways, will be married to Jesus (Revelation 19), and will enjoy the New Jerusalem forever (Revelation 21). Those who find their pleasure in the prostitute will die in the end.

Church family, this is how we need to live: looking to Jesus and his promised blessing! Turning from the great prostitute and the ways of the world!

2. The Mystery (verses 7-14)

Revelation 17:6

... When I saw her, I marveled greatly. 7 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.

In verses 7-14, the angel promises to tell John "the mystery of the woman and of the beast." He doesn't tell us much about the woman, but he tells us a bunch about the beast with seven heads and ten horns, upon whom the woman is mounted. Kistemaker, in his commentary, says that this is because "the beast is more important than the woman"^[2] because Satan is the power behind the beast (Revelation 13:4). This sounds reasonable.

Anyway, here is what the angel tells John about the beast:

Revelation 17:8

The beast that you saw was, and is not, and is about to rise from the bottomless pit and go to destruction.

Throughout the book of Revelation, you hear about God "who was and is and is to come." Near the beginning of Revelation we read, "John to the seven churches that are in Asia: Grace to you and peace from him who is and who was and who is to come" (Revelation 1:4). Later, this is how God identifies himself. "I am the Alpha and the Omega," says the Lord God, "who is and who was and who is to come, the Almighty"

(Revelation 1:8).

This is how the four living creatures address the Lord in worship, "Day and night they never cease to say, 'Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord God Almighty, who was and is and is to come'" (Revelation 4:8)! This phrase here in Revelation 17:8 describes the beast comes close:

Revelation 17:8

The beast that you saw was, and is not, and is about to rise from the bottomless pit and go to destruction.

It's because Satan tries to imitate the Lord, becoming an imitation to him. If you remember when we talked about the beast in Revelation 13, one of the things that we pointed out was the "Unholy Trinity." You have the dragon, who is Satan, similar to God the Father. You have the beast, who is like the Son. You have the false prophet, who is like the Spirit. Here, you see that this "unholy Trinity" tries to be like God, but he falls short. Verse 8 says that the beast "is not." That's because (as John hears it), the beast is in the bottomless pit, awaiting the time when he would rise from the pit. And at his arrival, many will follow after him. Verse 8 continues:

Revelation 17:8

... 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.

Here is what the beast is ultimately seeking: worship. He wants the worship from the world, and the world gives it to him. We read in Revelation 13:4 "And they worshiped the dragon, for he had given his authority to the beast, and they worshiped the beast, saying, 'Who is like the beast, and who can fight against it?'" Revelation 13:8 also says "and all who dwell on the earth will worship [the beast]."

Now, there's a caveat. It is not everyone in the world who worships the beast. That is those

Revelation 17:8

... whose names have not been written in the book of life from the foundation of the world who marvel at and worship this beast.

This is the same caveat that is made in Revelation 13:8: "and all who dwell on earth will worship it, everyone whose name has not been written before the foundation of the world in the book of life of the Lamb who was slain." There is great encouragement and comfort right here. If you believe and trust in Jesus, you can be sure that your name is in the book of life. In fact, your name has been there "from the foundation of the world." God has known you before you were born (Galatians 1:15). God knows "the days that are formed for you, when as yet there was not one of them" (Psalm 139:16).

You get your name written in the book before the world was created. God grants you repentance and faith. You come to believe, and you are eternally secure in him! Even through the days of persecution and hardship, like the original readers of Revelation were facing. I'm sure that they would have been comforted by these words. The angel continues in verse 9.

Revelation 17:9

This calls for a mind with wisdom:

Indeed, what follows is really tough to understand.

Revelation 17:9

This calls for a mind with wisdom: the seven heads are seven mountains on which the woman is seated;

Some would say that this shows that Babylon is Rome, because Rome is built upon seven hills. However, this doesn't say "hills." It says, "mountains." Nobody knows what seven mountains are being referred to here. Perhaps, being consistent with apocalyptic literature, seven mountains simply means "the world." These seven heads aren't merely geographic locations, they are also people.

Revelation 17:10

they are also seven kings, five of whom have fallen, one is, the other has not yet come, and when he does come he must remain only a little while.

At this point, great wisdom is needed. Everyone has their own theory about who the five fallen kings are, and who "is," and who is "yet to come." Some see this as a series of Roman emperors, but to do so, some of the Emperors are arbitrarily left out. Some see this as the Old Testament empires. Egypt, Assyria, Babylon, Persia, Greece, Rome (which was at the time of writing), and some future empire. Some see this as entirely symbolic as another example of the conflict between God and Satan.^[3]

I'm not a deep enough student of history to make any sort of definitive statement. That's where wisdom must come in. Clearly, whoever these kings are, they all are (or will be) against the Lord. It only gets more confusing.

Revelation 17:11

As for the beast that was and is not, it is an eighth but it belongs to the seven, and it goes to destruction.

This beast is the one who has seven heads in the first place. It's the seven heads of the beast that are these seven kings. But then, this beast is actually the eighth of kings to come. I have no idea what this means, other than that this beast and its heads represent the powerful of the world. They all "go to destruction." It only gets worse. Verse 12 tells us of more kings to come.

Revelation 17:12

And 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.

It's not just the seven heads that are kings, nor the beast who is a king, but these horns are also kings. These kings seem to come successively after one another. It seems that these ten kings (of verse 12) all rise and reign at the same time. Yet, their reign is short-lived, only an hour. I have no idea whether this is a literal 60 minutes, or whether it simply represents a short time. At any rate, it looks as if they have some sort of council together, and cede their power to the beast. That's what verse 13 says.

Revelation 17:13

These are of one mind, and they hand over their power and authority to the beast.

That's what John saw. You can go two paths with these things. You can either spend your days reading history and your newspaper in attempts to figure out who these kings were and are, as you anticipate the kings to come. This will cause you to worry and fret and lean on your own understanding. Or you can simply grab the main point: Whoever these kings were and will be, they all will bow to the king of kings. This will give you great comfort. That's the point of verse 14.

Revelation 17:14

They will 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.

This is the simple point of the passage: The world powers all gang up and unite their power against Jesus. And Jesus wins! Jesus brings along his friends: They are identified as "the called and chosen and faithful." The "called and chosen" are from God. This gets back to the names written in the book before the foundation of the world. God has called and chosen those who will overcome the beast and all of the kings who bow to him. The "faithful" is us, who believe and trust Jesus until the end! May we all be found faithful.

3. The Judgment (verses 15-18)

Revelation 17:15

And the angel said to me, "The waters that you saw, where the prostitute is seated, are peoples and multitudes and nations and languages.

Remember the great prostitute was "seated upon many waters" (verse 1). The waters represent all of the people of the world. It shows the world-wide power of the prostitute.

Revelation 17:16

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,

It's at this point that the beast turns against the prostitute. Where once she was riding on top of the beast like a cowboy rides his horse, now the beast is behaving more like a bucking bronco, seeking to kick her off of her back. When she falls to the ground, the beast strips her of her power, devours her flesh, and burns her with fire. That is, the beast allowed the prostitute to exert her influence when it helped him. Now that he comes on the scene, she will be devoured. It wasn't the beast that turned the tide. It was God in his sovereignty.

Revelation 17:17-18

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. And the woman that you saw is the great city that has dominion over the kings of the earth."

Just as God writes our names in the book of life, which will keep us and preserve us, God will also exert his influence upon people to join in with the power of the beast. All in accordance with God's plan.

Verse 18 tells us that the prostitute is Babylon. Next week, in chapter 18, we will see the fall of Babylon. "Fallen, fallen is Babylon the great" (Revelation 18:2). Here we see the judgment of the great prostitute. Babylon and the world's system will be destroyed.

I close with two applications.

The first is one of comfort. You should be comforted by these words! So many people read Revelation and become fearful of all that will come. Some people don't want to read Revelation because they don't want to know. They're scared of the book. I was scared of the book before I started preaching it.

I encourage you to rest in God and his care for you. Trust that your name is in his book. Trust that he will keep you faithful until the end. The book of Revelation is intended to bring blessing upon our lives (Revelation 1:3). Be comforted by this message. You will not be comforted if you're pursuing and joining up with the prostitute of the world. But if you can stay away, then you can be comforted that even if the world hates you, God doesn't.

My second application comes straight from John's writing. "Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world—the desires of the flesh and the desires of the eyes and pride of life—is not from the Father but is from the world. And the world is passing away along with its desires, but whoever does the will of God abides forever" (1 John 2:15-17).

Church family, don't love the world. Don't let your sinful pressures and lusts of flesh satisfy themselves. Pray, "Rise oh Lord, be our help!"

Don't love the world. Why? Because the world is passing away! Is that not what we see here? The prostitute and the beast will be destroyed, despite their power. The reason why we don't pursue the desires of the flesh, the desires of the eyes and the pride of life is because we know that it is passing away. If we love God, we won't love the things of the world. "If anyone loves the world, the love of the father is not in him" (1 John 2:15).

This great prostitute holds all of the power and allure of the world. She gratifies the desires of the flesh. She satisfies the desires of the eyes. She has a pride of life. But don't be fooled. She is passing away. Along with the world, she is passing away. Don't love the prostitute. Don't love the world! Love the Father. He has been gracious to us in Jesus.

This sermon was delivered to Rock Valley Bible Church on January 14, 2024 by Steve Brandon.
For more information see www.rockvalleybiblechurch.org.

[1] For instance, George Eldon Ladd, *A Commentary on the Book of Revelation* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1972).

[2] Simon Kistemaker, *New Testament Commentary: Revelation* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 2001), 468-469.

[3] <https://bible.org/seriespage/revelation-17-18>.