

Week 10

Revelation 15-18

This week as we approach the details of the final battle between the kingdom of God and the kingdom of this world we are going to examine the characteristics of this earthly kingdom called Babylon which has been established to replace God and we can see functioning today.

We will start with an overview of chapters 15-16 that describes God's judgment that is poured on Satan and his demonic forces. It will also fall on men who have aligned themselves with this kingdom. Remember, this judgment was never intended for man. But men will voluntarily place themselves in this place of judgment by rejecting God.

Followers of Christ will either be in Heaven if you hold to a pre- or mid tribulation rapture view or they will be protected on the earth. Don't if we will have balcony or front row but either way quite a show.

Chapters 15-16

These chapters describe the bowl judgments that John previewed in chapters 12-14. Seven angels carry these bowls of God's wrath from His presence and pour them out on the earth. There are similarities not only to the trumpet judgments of Rev. 8-9, but there is also a strong reference to the plagues of Egypt from the book of Exodus as the chart below shows.

Rev. 8-9 Trumpet Judgments	Rev. 15-16 Bowl Judgments	Exodus 7-12 Plagues of Egypt
	1. Skin sores	Boils on skin (6 th plague)
1/3 sea turns to blood (2 nd trumpet)	2. Sea turns to blood	
1/3 fresh water turns to blood (3 rd trumpet)	3. All fresh water turn to blood	Nile turns to blood (1 st plague)
1/3 of earth burns (1 st trumpet)	4. Sunburst scorches earth	
Smoke darkens sun, moon (4 th & 5 th trumpets)	5. Darkness	Darkness (9 th plague)
Locusts at Euphrates, war (6 th trumpet)	6. Drying of Euphrates River, war	Drought brings locusts (8 th plague)
Earthquake, thunder, hail (7 th trumpet)	7. Earthquake, thunder, hail	Thunder, hail (7 th plague)

The plagues of Egypt were warnings to a rebellious nation that had enslaved God's people and would not release them or submit to God. This was a type of foreshadowing and a warning of what would happen in the last days.

Here again we see the mercy of God before judgment. But, what is man's response to God's mercy?

In Rev. 16:11, 21 is says, "they cursed God." People will KNOW this is God's working & still reject Him.

If those days had not been cut short, no one would survive, but for the sake of the elect those days will be shortened. Matt. 24:22

The last section of chapter 16 describes this demonic influence that brings the leaders of the world together in preparation for the final battle of Armageddon which will take place in chapter 19.

Chapter 17-18

The next two chapters put the focus on Babylon this woman called the "mother of prostitutes" who seduces the leaders and the people of this world into following her in rebellion against God. We learn that Satan is the beast behind her power and authority.

This Babylonian Kingdom describes symbolically as ten horns and ten kings, represents every kingdom, ideology, government, social or religious system that has ever set itself up against God. Now all these groups come together in the culmination of man's setting himself apart from God.

This period of time will be marked by a feeling that finally man has become enlightened enough to solve the world's problems. There will be a huge gap between those who are rich and the poor but the poor will be given just enough to maintain a slave level of existence and serve those who have. Then suddenly, the world will be surprised by these trumpet and bowl judgments. Many will, many will repent and turn to God but as these progress more and more people will chose to blame God and defy His claim on their lives and His rulership over all His creation.

Background on Babylon

The ancient meaning of the word is "gateway of the gods". This city is one of the oldest in the world. It was where the people built the Tower of Babel. It is located just south of modern-day Baghdad, Iraq. The Hebrew name means, "confusion" as this is where God confused the language of the people and they dispersed throughout the world. God stopped them from building the Tower of Babel. Man in his rebellion did not want to face another catastrophe like the worldwide flood that had previously wiped out mankind during the time of Noah. The goal in building this tower to be elevated enough to live the way they wanted without God being able to judge them with another flood. Here in a more evolved and sophisticated manner man has been manipulated and enticed to build another tower, a kingdom that seems so self-sufficient there is no longer the need for someone or something as archaic as God.

This is the very place were man started a new rebellion just after the flood wiped almost all of humanity.

The fall of Babylon is also prophetically described in Isaiah 13-14, 47. Together with passages in Zechariah and here in 2 chapters in Revelation, we see the qualities of this kingdom and I want to spend some time drawing parallels so you can see that we are on this road to becoming Babylon.

Systems	Example of moving toward Babylon
Education	<p>“Understanding Imperialism: [Defined as] economic and political control of other nations. ...Many imperialists believed that they had a God-given mission to spread Christianity.” <u>A More Perfect Union</u>, (Social Studies book) 534</p> <p>A lesson on the Roman Coliseum, “persecution” is simply defined as “the act of being harassed for differing beliefs” <u>Discover Our Heritage</u></p>
Economic	<p>The demand for profits and to make more money and create debt based on selfishness has exploited our nation and cost us jobs.</p> <p>Babylon entices us us into craving what she has to sell.</p>
Entertainment & Arts	<p>Christians are portrayed as behind the times, out of touch, and un-thinking fundamentalist wackos.</p>
Business	<p>“Greed is good”- Gordon Gekko in <u>Wall Street</u> 1987 back in a sequel. Everyday news breaks on another company exec. Who has mishandled money or hurt investors.</p>
Medicine	<p>Doctors who used to protect life now engage in abortions and advocate euthanasia.</p>
Science	<p>In the movie “Expelled” Ben Stein exposes the anti-Christian bias in the scientific community.</p>
Legal system	<p>Abandoned a judeo-christian perspective in exchange for situational ethics and case law.</p>
Journalism	<p>Over 70% of journalists are atheists. This compared to a nation where only 20% claim to be atheists.</p>
Religion	<p>Churches more liberal, more humanistic, reinterpreting the bible to make it more acceptable, ignoring tough subjects like sin, holiness, judgment, Hell.</p>

This Babylonian system will seduce humanity into a slavery that is so attractive, comfortable, and titillating, we do not recognize it as slavery.

We are convinced that Calvin Klein can make us more sexually attractive, a Lexus will impress people and improve our image and give us more self-worth, and drinking Pepsi will keep us young.

Why spend money on what is not bread, and your labor on what does not satisfy? Isa. 55:2

“I believe America is the best Babylon on the face of the earth-but in the end, it is still Babylon nevertheless.” - Tony Campolo

Rev. 18 describes the fall of Babylon. Remember, when Babylon falls the saints lose nothing.

Give back to her as she has given; pay her back double for what she has done. Mix her a double portion from her own cup. ⁷Give her as much torture and grief as the glory and luxury she gave

herself. Rev. 18:6-7

The same measure that was used to pridefully heap up selfish interests will be the same measure of judgment.

"When the kings of the earth who committed adultery with her and shared her luxury see the smoke of her burning, they will weep and mourn over her. ¹⁰Terrified at her torment, they will stand far off and cry: " 'Woe! Woe, O great city, O Babylon, city of power! In one hour your doom has come!' "
Rev. 18:9

Everything that people in this world have come to trust will be wiped out in one day. All the pride they had in a they had created with no place for God is now gone.

"The merchants of the earth will weep and mourn over her because no one buys their cargoes any more ...bodies and souls of men. " Rev. 18:11,13

Is it no wonder that a major crisis in our world today is the growth of sex and slave trafficking.

Rejoice over her, O heaven! Rejoice, saints and apostles and prophets! God has judged her for the way she treated you.' " Rev. 18:20

If we are tied to this system we will not be in tears as some but will rejoice that this kingdom that has deceived and exploited millions of people is coming down. Ewe can rejoice because we know it is being replaced by a the Kingdom of God.

What should be our perspective or attitude toward these current and future events? The apostle Paul wrote in his very first letter to the church at Thessalonica and gave us direction.

Now, brothers, about times and dates we do not need to write to you, ²for you know very well that the day of the Lord will come like a thief in the night. ³While people are saying, "Peace and safety," destruction will come on them suddenly, as labor pains on a pregnant woman, and they will not escape.

⁴But you, brothers, are not in darkness so that this day should surprise you like a thief. ⁵You are all sons of the light and sons of the day. We do not belong to the night or to the darkness. ⁶So then, let us not be like others, who are asleep, but let us be alert and self-controlled. ⁷For those who sleep, sleep at night, and those who get drunk, get drunk at night. ⁸But since we belong to the day, let us be self-controlled, putting on faith and love as a breastplate, and the hope of salvation as a helmet. ⁹For God did not appoint us to suffer wrath but to receive salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ. ¹⁰He died for us so that, whether we are awake or asleep, we may live together with him. ¹¹Therefore encourage one another and build each other up, just as in fact you are doing.

1 Thessalonians 5:1-10