

What's So Bad About Babylon? (2013) (Part Three)

Babylon in Prophecy Today

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II Thessalonian 3:1-5 Finally brethren, pray for us, that the word of the Lord may have run swiftly and be glorified, just as it is with you, and that we may be delivered from unreasonable and wicked men; for not all have faith. But the Lord is faithful who will establish you and guard you from the evil one. And we have confidence in the Lord concerning you, both that you do and will do the things we command you. Now may the Lord direct your hearts into the love of God and into the patience of Christ.

I want these verses to be the theme of this sermon, considering the times we are living in and most especially regarding the distressing news that we hear virtually every day, as much of what we love about living in this country, in this nation, is trampled upon and taken away. There is an end and the end is good and it is good beyond our wildest dreams, but getting there is difficult and it is our assignment from our God and Creator to patiently endure, trusting Him to faithfully bring us through the circumstances that we may see at this time no end to.

Wishing what is happening out there would go away is not going to make whatever it is go away. We may have to face the reality that it is going to get worse than it already is. The entire world's sins have mounted to heaven and I do not see any hope of repentance at this point.

One of the elements that I do not want us to ever lose sight of is the importance of our living by faith. It is a sharp awareness of God's sovereignty in this pattern of events we are living within. We must always never forget that it is *His purpose that is being worked out* regardless of how bad things get in the United States, around the world, or in our life personally. We must always hang on to the fact that God's purpose is being worked out. I cannot emphasize this strongly enough! Despite the way things look He is in absolute control and has been right from the very beginning. Neither timing nor events are happening randomly. He is faithfully overseeing what is unfolding in our life time.

Genesis 1:26 Then God said, "Let Us [Father and Son] make man in Our image, according to Our likeness, let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air, and over the cattle, over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth."

That clearly states Their overall purpose for this creation. Six thousand years later, we came on the scene but nonetheless it is the same purpose and it is still being worked out. It is just much, much larger than we ever dreamed when we first came aboard. We must always hold in our mind what God says in Isaiah 46:10.

Isaiah 46:10 Declaring [God] the end from the beginning.

When He started, it was already plotted out, all the way to the end. I am not saying that every detail was plotted out, but everything was plotted out so that there was an overview that He was shooting for and He is accomplishing it, and He also affirms then that His council will stand. That is His

promise; nothing is going to turn Him aside, regardless of how bad that it looks to us. Even in the vast sweep of events within man's history. He is still working out that very same purpose. He has not been swept aside and has not deviated one iota.

He is briefly stating there in Genesis 1:26 that He is reproducing Himself. I do not see how His purpose can be stated more distinctively and clearly than that. Every living thing that He has created has been given the power by Him to reproduce itself, as a witness to you and me of what He is doing. He is reproducing Himself, but that is neither easy nor simple when what is being reproduced are the character images of the Creator from the raw material of human beings so easily drawn to foolish choices that dwell within us.

Satan, the enemy identified in this revealing by the Creator, is the other major personality in this huge time-consuming operation, but he, like mankind, is a creation of God. He, though being an invisible spirit like God, is ever-living, compared to man's brief lifetime, and immensely superior to us regarding intelligence, and seemingly has a vast advantage over us in experience, both with God and with other humans that he can draw upon and use against us.

However, he is also clearly inferior to the Creator in every way, and because God is mercifully working with us in this purpose, we actually have the advantage over Satan. God's purpose will be worked out in good order in each of our lives as long as we remain faithful to God's purpose.

We will shift gears for a period of time. I want to establish what I believe is helpful toward tying the vast sweep of history involved in this subject together with an overview of an element important to understanding the identity of the woman in the vision in Revelation 17 and 18.

I took some time in the previous sermon to emphasize that the founding of Babylon described in Genesis 11 took place during the lifetimes of the generation that came through the Flood plus at least the first two generations born after the Flood.

Recall that Noah's son, Ham, lived through the Flood. Cush, then was born to Ham, then Nimrod to Cush. Thus Nimrod, Babylon's major founder, was in only the second generation following the Flood. The Flood should have been a distinct, shocking, and vivid break in the flow of the way life was lived, an event never to be forgotten and impacting dramatically on how people live their lives.

We will go back to Genesis 4, following a stream of thought. This occurs after Cain killed Abel.

Genesis 4:16-17 Then Cain went out from the presence of the Lord and dwelt in the land of Nod [or, "wandering"] on the East of Eden. And Cain knew his wife, and she conceived and bore Enoch. And he built a city, and called the name of he city after name of his son—Enoch.

Reflect back to the purity that existed in Eden. But then Adam and Eve soon allowed the world around them—which at that time consisted only of the serpent—to corrupt them through the combination of their disbelief of God and the serpent's deception. Then after that Cain killed Abel and became a wanderer, and the first significant thing that God mentions of him is that Cain built a city.

We are beginning to see a pattern emerge, what did they do after the Flood? They built a city.

Psalm 49:1-3 Hear this, all you peoples; give ear, all you inhabitants of the world, both low and high, rich and poor together. My mouth shall speak wisdom, and the meditation of my heart shall bring understanding.

Psalm 49:10 For he sees that wise men die; likewise the fool and the senseless person perish, and leave their wealth to others.

He is wondering about this—what is fair about life?

Psalm 49:11 Their inner thought is that their houses will last forever, their dwelling places to all generations. They call their lands [or cities], after their own names.

The psalmist is implying that what a person does is revealing of his inner motivations. What moved that person to do that? What moved Cain, right off the bat, to build a city? Something was motivating him. In Cain's case, it was a drive, first of all, to be safe from being killed. You know how they build cities, with walls around them. He asked God to do something otherwise everybody that saw him was going to kill him, so he gave Cain a mark, or whatever it was, but Cain took one step beyond that, he built a city to protect himself within.

As I showed you in the previous sermon, when they were building Babylon, the first thing they did was build a city and the reason was to keep themselves safe. A city symbolically indicates a fortified area in which someone is safe within its walls from the intrusions of those bad guys on the outside.

On the other hand, there is another motivation here. The people on the inside are *trapped* inside, and are much easier to control if those leaders in the city have that in mind. And brethren, they do. We know from history, partly Bible history, partly profane history, that Cain had that idea, as did Nimrod and his cohorts.

There is another reason: that it was a way, ultimately, to become renowned. A city is a means of increase of power and control over others. In the remainder of Genesis 4, we are briefly told of the nature of the culture that developed in that city.

So what do we find there? One of the first things mentioned is his grandson, Lamech, had a multiple marriage with two women. We also find the mention of technological developments, metallurgy developed, what do you do with metallurgy? You make weapons, as well as plowshares and those kind of things. Interestingly, he mentions the development of music, which has a tendency to hold people and communities together. It is something they share and participate in the writing of.

Hold that in the back of your mind, because Babylon was a city, a very important city, and like this city that Cain built it was the first one after the Flood, and it became very, very influential.

Genesis 6:5 Then the Lord saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every intent of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually.

God provides us with His justification for what He judged necessary for the continuation of His purpose, that is, He would send the Flood. It was not merely that mankind was doing evil things, the evil was so deeply embedded in the heart, it was possibly headed toward making repentance impossible. Every thought was only evil continually.

In that sense, the Flood was an act of mercy—God putting them to death before things got worse. So the Flood was shockingly death-dealing and should have been a purifying event in the hearts of those God saved through it. When death occurs, the penalty for sin is paid. However, as we see with Israel's experiences in the wilderness, God's presence and miracles do not convert the heart.

There was another negative factor at work here. However, a more normal level of life began as the waters receded, but considering how long people lived, the amount and level of knowledge the survivors of the Flood possibly had to work with normalcy, things did not remain normal for very long.

There are indications that they might have been shooting spaceships off to the moon, and things like that before the Flood! Remember those people lived hundreds and hundreds of years. How long did they have to learn things?

I think I mentioned things to you in the past, that it is good to read books like *The Bible as History* and see what they have already found was developed *after* the Flood, where there are pretty good records from where Abraham was from, from Ur of the Chaldees and what they had developed by that time. When those people came through the Flood, they had a great deal of knowledge, profane secular knowledge of things that they could do.

I think that it is interesting that in Genesis 9, God records that Noah got drunk. That would seem in a way like such a minor issue and yet God recorded it, which means there is something here, not necessarily anything wrong with Noah, but he got drunk. What happens when a person gets drunk? They are easily taken advantage of, and while he was under the influence, an illicit sexual event occurred while he was in a state of stupor that involved the family of Ham, and most specifically Canaan. That is interesting to me because it appears that Ham's family provided the leadership for the founding of Babylon.

That is why I went through that with you about who is related to whom so that we could identify the family through which that development took place. It was not Shem's family, it was not Arphaxad's family, it was not Eber's family, it was not Abraham's family, it was another branch of Noah's family and that branch was the one that created this illicit sexual event when Noah unfortunately got drunk.

This is interesting to me because I want us to be aware of the symbolic linkage that God uses, because it is important to our faith and understanding for the end time events that we are living within.

The time element here in Jeremiah 51 is roughly about 586 BC, before Israel fell. Babylon did not fall until it was a great power. Babylon did not fall until 539 BC.

Jeremiah 51:6-7 Flee from the midst of Babylon, and every one save his life! Do not be but off in her iniquity, for this is the time of the Lord's vengeance; He shall recompense her. Babylon was a golden cup in the Lord's hand, that made all the earth drunk. The nations drank her wine; therefore the nations are deranged.

One Bible translated it, “the nations have gone mad” because of what the symbolic woman is providing them with. Babylon did not fall until 539, but here is a prophecy prophesying of their fall.

At the time of this prophecy Babylon had already continuously existed for about 1500 years. And it is now another 2500 years which have passed and we came on the scene, and God is still using the same symbolism and Babylon is still infecting others with its influence.

Revelation 17 and 18, in that vision of the harlot woman and her cup of wine, are specifically named Babylon the Great. However, there is no nation on earth named Babylon, let alone Babylon the Great.

Think about all the linkage God is showing between Noah and his descendants, the founding of the city of Babylon by his progeny, the woman named Babylon, and the wine making people drunk, and end time events. I believe that God is making a point to help strengthen our faith during these troubled times—a point that gives us a clear vision of the evil system that we are having to negotiate as we live our lives.

This has significant impact on the importance of Babylon being named in Revelation 17 and 18. That is in the end time just before Christ returns therefore within our lifetimes, especially when one knows, and knows that they know, that Babylon of old no longer exists either as a city or a nation.

God made sure of this. Do we believe it? It is important to our faith. Let us see what God says as He describes this. In Jeremiah 46, a series of prophecies begins against the nations of Egypt, Philistia, Moab, Ammon, and Edom, chapter after chapter, one chapter devoted to each one. In addition to that God adds to that the city of Damascus, and several other cities.

Now we are up to chapter 50. He begins prophesying against Babylon and spends as many words against Babylon as He did in all the others *combined*. This indicates Babylon's importance regarding Israel's welfare. It is also important to you and me as God's children. Let us notice carefully, using selected verses what God pronounces against Babylon.

Jeremiah 50:1-3 The word that the Lord spoke against Babylon and against the land of the Chaldeans by Jeremiah the prophet. Declare among the nations, proclaim, and set up a standard. Proclaim—do not conceal it—Say, ‘Babylon is taken, Bel is shamed. Merodach is broken in pieces; her idols are humiliated, her images are broken in pieces.’ For out of the north a nation comes up against her, which shall make her land desolate, and no one shall dwell therein. They shall move, they shall depart [the people are going to flee], both man and beast.

Jeremiah 50:26 Come against her from the farthest border; open her storehouses; cast her up as heaps of ruins, and destroy her utterly; let nothing of her be left.

Jeremiah 51:27-29 Set up a banner in the land, blow the trumpet among the nations! Prepare the nations against her, call the kingdoms together against her; Ararat, Minni, and Ashkenazim. Appoint a marshal against her; cause the horses to come up like the bristling locusts. Prepare against her the nations, with the kings of the Medes, its governors and all its rulers, all the land of his dominion. And the land will tremble and sorrow; for every purpose of the Lord shall be performed against Babylon, to make the land of Babylon a desolation without inhabitant.

How many ways does He have to say it?

Jeremiah 51:36 Therefore thus says the Lord: “Behold, I will plead your case and take vengeance for you. I will dry up her sea and make her springs dry. Babylon shall become a heap, a dwelling place for jackals, an astonishment and a hissing, without an inhabitant.

Jeremiah 51:43 Her cities are a desolation, a dry land and a wilderness, a land where none dwells, through which no son of man passes.

Jeremiah 51:59-64 The word which Jeremiah the prophet commanded Seraiah the son of Neriah, the son or Mahseiah, when he went with Zedekiah the king of Judah to Babylon in the fourth year of his reign. And Seraiah was the quartermaster. So Jeremiah wrote in a book all the evil that would come upon Babylon, all these words that are written against Babylon. And Jeremiah said to Seraiah, “When you arrive in Babylon and see it, and read all these words, then you shall say, ‘O Lord, You have spoken against this place to cut it off, so that none shall remain in it, neither man nor beast, but it shall be desolate forever.’ Now it shall be, when you have finished reading this book, that you shall tie a stone to it and throw it out into the Euphrates. Then you shall say, ‘Thus Babylon shall sink and not rise from the catastrophe that I will bring upon her. And they shall be weary.’” Thus far are the words of Jeremiah.

I have tried to read these chapters very carefully to discover whether there is any chance it does not apply to the 6th century BC rather than our time, the end time. No, brethren, these prophesies are written to apply to that period of time that began in 539 BC. Babylon no longer exists as a city or a nation.

I have tried in the past to apply the harlot woman to a specific institution, like the Roman Catholic Church. After that I tried to apply it to a specific nation, The United States of America. I have tried to apply it to Israel as a whole, primarily because it is located in Europe.

I did this partly because God Himself shows Israel to have acted as a harlot woman within its relationship with Him. He directly calls Israel an adulterer many times, so some of the accusations made against the harlot would stick very well to Israel. But I have concluded that this will not work, because this woman in Revelation 17 and 18 is far more influential than any single nation or any single institution.

That woman has infected every single person who has ever come into contact with her, and nobody has ever avoided contact with her. Only one, Jesus Christ, never submitted to her attractive but deadly persuasions.

We will go back to the book of Revelation, and we will read three sections.

Revelation 17:1-5 Then one of the seven angels who had the seven bowls came and talked with me, saying to me, “Come, I will show you the judgment of the great harlot who sits on many waters, with whom the kings of the earth committed fornication, and the inhabitants of the earth were made drunk with the wine of her fornication.” So he carried me away in the Spirit into the wilderness. And I saw a woman sitting on a scarlet beast which was full of names of blasphemy, having seven heads and ten horns. The woman was arrayed in purple and scarlet, and adorned with gold and precious stones and

pearls, having in her hand a golden cup full of abominations and the filthiness of her fornication. And on her forehead a name was written: MYSTERY BABYLON THE GREAT, THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS AND OF THE ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH

You see there basically exactly the same symbolism as you would see back in the book of Jeremiah, or all those other connections that I gave you from Cain up through Noah and on to Babylon.

Revelation 18:1-3 After these things I saw another angel coming down from heaven, having great authority, and the earth was illuminated with his glory. And he cried mightily with a loud voice saying, “Babylon the great is fallen, is fallen [notice it is mentioned twice; it has already fallen once, but it will fall one more time. We are beginning to see here that despite the obliteration of the original city of Babylon, there is some aspect of Babylon that still remains], and has become a habitation of demons, a prison for every foul spirit, and a cage for every unclean and hated bird. For all the nations have drunk her wine of the wrath of her fornication, the kings of the earth have committed fornication with her, and the merchants of the earth have become rich through the abundance of her luxury.”

Now let us make another connection here, this time with I John 2.

I John 2:15-17 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 lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life—is not of the Father but is of the world. And the world is passing away, and the lust of it; but he who does the will of God abides forever.

God leaves no doubt that this system, which is what I termed it in the previous two sermons. Babylon is a system, and it is powerfully, carnally attractive. In fact, virtually irresistible. I would have to say not virtually; it *is* irresistible to the carnal mind.

Those who have a spiritual mind can resist it, but without having that extra help it is impossible to resist and you know that even in the state of our conversion, that it is still very difficult to resist it. Everywhere we turn, it is there. That *woman* is there.

Much of its attractiveness lies in its appeal to the senses, and also in its appeal to ambition. I did not stress this a lot when we were describing Babylon or the development of cities, but cities appeal to ambition, their drive to develop technology, and so on.

Is God against power? Is He against greatness? Is He against attractiveness or wealth? Not at all, but He is against impurity. That is how this wealth and power is obtained, and how it is used. Because Babylon has already shown by its fruit that the drive for these things is completely self-centered and not within God's purpose for mankind.

What are we looking at here in Revelation 17 and 18? In Genesis 3, we saw the symbolic woman in its beginning. In Revelation 17, 18, and 19, we see its end. In between, on the way, we passed through the way of Cain, which was part of it, and then the Flood, which was the build-up to the naming of the city.

We saw the beginning of Babylon the city in Genesis 11, but in Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and Daniel, we see God's prophets deal with it in its connection with Israel, as nations, and in *every* case, God counsels us, by either showing us how it was built, or the fruit of its ways, or directly warns us to avoid it, or flee from it for our own good.

In every circumstance that we have looked into, except for the Father and Son, there is only one constant: the times change from Cain to Babylon, the people change from Cain to Babylon, to Babylon's contact with Israel, the personalities change from Nimrod to Hezekiah, and all the personalities in the prophets of God, both godly and evil change, but the deceiver Satan remains the one constant.

Satan is clearly named by God as the enemy of His purpose and therefore of mankind. He is described in prophecy as having deceived the entire world. He is described by Jesus as a liar in whom no truth dwells, he is a murderer from the beginning and he is worshipped as though he is God. He is the one constant that has abided by evil from the beginning in the Garden of Eden through Cain, the way of Cain through Babylon and its founding, through the building of Babylon into a great world power. God destroyed the city, but He did not destroy Satan.

So God kept Satan as a *witness* to all of us, that as long as He leaves Satan alive, the way of Babylon will never end, because that city reflects his mind, it is his way of life. So what are we looking at there in Revelation 17 and 18 in the harlot woman? We are looking at the survival of Babylon's spirit, because Satan is ever-living from before man's creation, it is he that keeps its evil way infecting those enticed to it, because they will not resist the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life that draws them to its way.

We will look at Babylon's appeal in more detail. We will go back to Proverbs 7. We will read the entire chapter. When Evelyn and I first came into the Worldwide Church of God back in 1959, they were reading this chapter and applying it to the Catholic Church. Indeed it does apply, but there is something far, far greater than the Catholic Church involved here. It is Babylon and its spirit. It is the world. Do you get that? The harlot woman is the world.

Proverbs 7:1-5 My son, keep my words, and treasure my commands within you. Keep my commands and live, and my law as the apple of your eye. Bind them on your fingers; write them on the tablet of your heart. Say to wisdom, "You are my sister," and call understanding your nearest kin, that they may keep you from the immoral woman, from the seductress who flatters with her words.

Satan has deceived all mankind with words; we see it right from the beginning. That is what he did with Adam and Eve. He deceived them with words. What did Jesus say? Words are spirit, there is power in them. They motivate people to move in certain directions.

Proverbs 7:6-27 For at the window of my house I looked through my lattice and saw among the simple I perceived among the youths, a young man devoid of understanding, [God does not want us to be simple minded. He wants us to get it.] passing along the street near her corner; and he took the path to her house in the twilight, in the evening, in the black and dark night. And there a woman met him, with the attire of a harlot [how is the woman dressed in Revelation 17 and 18?], and a crafty heart. She was loud and rebellious, her feet would not stay at home. At times she was outside, at times in the open square, lurking at every corner. [You cannot escape Satan, he is everywhere, and

his cohorts are right there of the same general mind.] So she caught him and kissed him: “I have peace offerings with me; today I have paid my vows. So I came out to meet you, diligently to seek your face, and I have found you. I have spread my bed with tapestry [How often is fornication and adultery used with this woman In Revelation 17?], colored coverings of Egyptian linen. I have perfumed my bed with myrrh, aloes, and cinnamon. Come, let us take our fill of love until morning; let us delight ourselves with love. For my husband is not at home; he has gone on a long journey; he has taken a bag of money with him, and will come home on the appointed day.” With her enticing speech she caused him to yield, with her flattering lips she seduced him. Immediately he went after her, as an ox goes to the slaughter, or as a fool to the correction of the stocks, till an arrow struck his liver. As a bird hastens to the snare, he did not know it would take his life. Now therefore, listen to me, my children; pay attention to the words of my mouth: Do not let your heart turn aside to her ways, do not stray into her paths; for she has cast down many wounded, and all who were slain by her were strong men. Her house is the way to hell, descending to the chambers of death.

The great harlot in Revelation 17 and 18 symbolizes the combination of the spiritually evil and seductive system established and arrayed by Satan in rebellious opposition to God, and mankind, and God's purpose, and called by the apostles, “the world.” What we see is humanity driven by false loves, false values, false systems, and false knowledge.

What we see there in Revelation 17 and 18, is the world apart from God—meaning the world as Ecclesiastes described it, *under the sun*, apart from God. Pay attention to the characteristics God uses to describe the attractive and enticements of her way of her way of life, and the fruits of her way of life.

Revelation 17:2 With whom the kings of the earth committed fornication, and the inhabitants of the earth were made drunk with the wine of her fornication.

It is interesting, just drawing upon this symbolism here, that God specifically says that Noah got drunk on wine. Of course that illicit sexual act followed, which would be called by the Greeks, *porneia*. We will get to that in a minute.

There is a good reason why wine is used as a symbol in relation to the woman, because wine is a drugging intoxicant but it is sneaky, in that it does not immediately knock one senseless. By chemical means, alcohol, if allowed by the drinker, derisively taunts a person mind. It even says in Proverbs 20:1, “wine is a mocker.”

A mocker is one who taunts derisively, “Come on, come on, you’re strong enough. I taste good. I won’t hurt you.” That is what alcohol does if it is not controlled. It gains control of you and enslaves. That is what happens with this woman when we drink of her wine that intoxicates. So the world, Babylon, if permitted, will steadily erode a person’s spiritual powers and make one drowsy and stupid to the reality of its influence. It deadens one’s spiritual perspective thus leading them to immoral judgments and all the while molding, shaping conduct by means of one’s fascination with its carnal allure.

One of Satan's major offenses is to corrupt and thus undermine governmental and business leadership. That is why it draws attention to the leadership in business and government committing fornication with her. So therefore, Babylon the woman is symbolized as a prostitute, rapaciously committing fornication with those sectors of the culture.

If you are familiar at all with the Old Testament, how frequently does God picture Israel doing that as His wife? She found everyone else attractive but Him. That is incredible, but that is the way He describes Israel's behavior. Most of us are Israelites. We are converted ones, but if Satan was able to dupe those people, he can dupe us.

This is why I said to you right at the very beginning, to have faith in God and trust Him because, believe it or not, because God is with us, we actually have the advantage over him! Jesus Christ did battle with Satan, in Matthew 4, and Luke 4, and in each case He overcame him by not submitting to him, by casting out his arguments and just turning aside. He did not whip him over the head, or beat him with a baseball bat or anything like that. He just refused to follow him and imbibe.

Now why is this thing about *porneia* with the leadership so important? It is important because the people, the sheep (even God calls Israel sheep), who are betrayed by their shepherds—and by the shepherds he means primarily the governmental leaders, the business leaders, and the religious leader, they are all shepherds of a sort—instead of following God, they are committing fornication with Babylon, and being lured into the place where the people then follow the leadership. The sheep will follow their leader's examples.

So God uses this term to define spiritual corruption in relationships with Him, and this is culturally very destructive. As I mentioned in a previous sermon, it promotes faithlessness within the culture, because it is so self-centered. Faithlessness becomes rampant in every aspect of community life. I just remind you, the divorce rates are not going down, the fornication rates are escalating, and more and more people are involved in illicit relationships, like we just heard. What is not even a marriage but they call it a marriage.

How much faithfulness does a prostitute in the symbolism portray?

Revelation 18:7 In the measure that she glorified herself and lived luxuriously, in the same measure give her torment and sorrow; for she says in her heart, "I sit as queen, and am no widow, and will not see sorrow."

This verse is very revealing regarding the dominant attitudes of those who are influenced by this satanic culture. In other words, what is being said here, these have become national sins of the people of Israel and they are luxury, and more specifically what luxury will buy. God is not against luxury, but He is against satiety, because satiety indicates over-indulgence, going to excess as a way of life, overeating, over-drinking, over everything. It is never enough. We always have to do it further and faster, and more. We have a whole nation of people overweight, over-drinking, and who knows what else over-

What is the effect of this? This may be the prime effect of Babylon's way, because this over-indulgence exposes ones self-centeredness, because the end result of this is, "Who needs God when we have all these good things?" It is a terrible way of thinking, but that is where it is headed.

What have we done in the United States is we got rid of God—legally—if you understand what I mean. Who needs God when you have all of this wealth? Virtually all of the leadership in the United States has rejected God. I am sure that is true in Britain, France, Netherlands, Germany, Norway, Sweden, Finland. You name it—they have rejected God. Instead, their God is their wealth.

God is quoting her saying, "I could use the wealth to avoid the troubles of life. I will see no sorrow." She is saying, "my personal comfort and satisfaction solves all problems," so she boasts, "I sit as a queen. I sit on top of the world and nothing will ever bring me down. I do not need to worry about tomorrow."

We are going to go to a verse that I feel encapsulates the general conduct and attitude of the United States of America. I use the United States because I am familiar with it, but all of the nations of Israel are the same, because we have all lived under basically the same kind of circumstances, even had the same basic religion. Everything is pretty much the same.

Please turn to II Timothy 3. It describes what we are living through.

II Timothy 3:1-5 But know this, that in the last days perilous times will come: For men will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, unloving, unforgiving, slanderers, without self control, brutal, despisers of good, traitors, headstrong, haughty, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God, having a form of godliness but denying its power. And from such people turn away!

Revelation 17:16-17 And the ten horns which you saw on the beast, these will hate the harlot, make her desolate and naked, eat her flesh and burn her with fire. For God has put it into their hearts to fulfill His purpose, to be of one mind, and to give their kingdom to the beast, until the words of God are fulfilled.

Revelation 18:5-6 For her sins have reached to heaven, and God has remembered her iniquities. Render to her just as she rendered to you, and repay her double according to her works. In the cup which she has mixed mix double for her.

Please turn to Psalm 2. I want to pick up something that is important, something that is coming in the end time and even now already exists.

Psalm 2:1-5 Why do the nations rage, and the people plot a vain thing? The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together, against the Lord and against His Anointed, saying, "Let us break their bonds in pieces and cast away their cords from us." He who sits in the heavens shall laugh; the Lord shall hold them in derision. Then He shall speak to them in His wrath, and distress them in His deep displeasure

I want you to notice verse 2 especially; "the kings of the earth set themselves and the rulers take council together." He is talking about a major conspiracy against God.

Revelation 13:1-8 Then I stood on the sand of the sea. And I saw a beast rising up out of the sea having seven and ten horns, and on his horns ten crowns, and on his heads a blasphemous name. Now the beast which I saw was like a leopard, his feet were like the feet of a bear, and his mouth like the mouth of a lion. The dragon gave him his power,

his throne, and great authority. I saw one of his heads as if it had been mortally wounded, and his deadly wound was healed. And all the world marveled and followed the beast. So they worshiped the dragon who gave authority to the beast. And they worshiped the beast saying, "Who is like the beast? Who is able to make war with him?" And he was given a mouth speaking great things and blasphemies, and he was given authority to continue for forty-two months. Then he opened his mouth in blasphemy against God, to blaspheme His name, His tabernacle, and those who dwell in heaven. It was granted to him to make war with the saints and to overcome them. And authority was given him over every tribe, tongue, and nation. All who dwell on the earth will worship him, whose names have not been written in the Book of Life of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world.

Here is a summary and a forecast of what I believe is going to happen. It is a quick overview; those scriptures will give us a general order of things. Babylon the prostitute is not a nation any more than Medo-Persia, Greco-Macedonia, or the Roman Empire are any longer nations. However the spirit of Babylon's way—its culture—remains, symbolized by the woman. That spirit is guiding, governing the action in the nations. This is why we must reason through the symbolism of the head and body analogy of King Nebuchadnezzar's image.

She represents the remnants of the original head of gold, and passed on by Satan through people practicing it—Medo-Persia, Greco-Macedonia, the Roman Empire—all the way down to the feet and toes. The activity we see described is taking place, this is very important, in the Western world, as the media calls it, because that is where the Israelitish nations are located today.

They have emigrated into that area. The Israelitish people as a chosen nation have *always* been the focus of the Bible. Other nations are mentioned only as they come into contact with Israel, but all of those nations of the Western world are living unknowingly controlled by the Babylonish way of life, which God hates, because it destroys life.

Next, recall that Jesus was crucified at the climax of a conspiracy engineered by Satan, through the religious leaders of His day, and Judas Iscariot. In like manner, Psalm 2 shows that just before Christ returns another conspiracy is under way, but this one involves the leadership of entire *nations*, not just a few people within one solitary nation, like the Jews.

That conspiracy is challenging God's purpose. The conspirator's agenda is already under way right at this moment and has been proceeding for a long, long time. Believe it or not, even in the western hemisphere, for hundreds of years. The Father and the Son and Satan too, plan and lay ground work far ahead of time. And the conspiracy is forming into the Beast of Revelation 13 and the scarlet Beast of Revelation 17. They are one and the same. It is only a symbol at this time but it will form into an alliance of powerful nations.

However, the Western world, with the help of the conspiracy, is presently collapsing from within, as the beast rises seizing power. Look at what is happening all around us. Some aspect of this huge change is in the news every day. The conspiracy is working to destroy the present Western world order. The way of life of the entire Western world is being altered; the conspirators are working to implement a *new world order*, after the fashion *they* are designing.

What they are implementing is what the Bible reveals as the beast. The conspiracy is a mixture at this time of Israelitish and Gentile peoples who have a commonality in the Babylonish way of life. The

men involved do not see the Beast as God sees it. They think that it is a wonderful experience for them. God see it rightly as an enemy of His way and His purpose and the enslaving of His people. They are deceived by Satan. They see it as a bright and shining future, for themselves.

I believe, according to the prophecy in Daniel 11 that the man, the Beast, will ascend to power fairly peacefully, but also very, very deceitfully, backed by the governing and business leadership arising with them. Once firmly in power, he and his cohorts will really tighten the screws. The old world order will be completely devastated, the new world order will be installed, and Revelation 13:14-18, where the number 666 and all those things come to pass. Mankind will be enslaved by Satan, for a short period of time—and then Christ will return.