

Date: 27.05.2020

Time: 7.30pm

Prayer Meeting taken by: Rev Gavino Fioretti

Psalm: Psalm 110:1-5 (Scottish Psalter)

Scripture: Revelation 17-18

Outline: Babylon

a) Introduction

1. Babylon's description

2. Babylon's ride

3. Babylon's fall

Babylon

- **Introduction**

These are difficult chapters, but encouragement is in them and more encouragement is to come! We see similarities and contrasts in these chapters as we see Satan's attempts to copy God's work.

Two women: We have been introduced previously to a picture of a beautiful woman who is a picture of the people of God. Here, we see another woman, who has similarities, but is so different. This woman appears beautiful on the outside, but is rotten inside.

Two cities: This second woman is called Babylon that was an evil city and is a picture of the worst enemy of God's people. In these chapters, we see the contrast between the people of God and the enemies of God, the city of God and the city of Babylon.

We see in these chapters the devil trying to pretend to be something he's not – trying to copy God. We see God defeating His enemies.

There is much symbolism in these chapters, but we're not focusing on the symbols. Babylon doesn't represent a particular person, organisation, or time – this is the enemy of God now that will be destroyed by God in the end. This is the world that stands against God.

1) **Babylon's description**

Wealthy: In the description of Babylon, we see that it is wealthy beyond measure – there are white linens, purple cloths – the devil is trying to replicate the city of God. The world looks beautiful, prosperous, filled with entertainment and man's achievements. But this world, where the church is, is an evil world.

The two beasts that we've been introduced to previously are aggressive in persecuting the church, but this Babylon is attempting to kill the church of God in a different way – it

seduces the world and tries to seduce the church with its wealth. Wealth is appealing and attractive, but it can be so destructive.

Idolater: Babylon is full of idolatry. The immorality referred to is idolatry. In contrast with God's city, where God is worshipped, in Babylon, there is an alliance with the devil. This idolatry is a picture of enemy religions that lead away from God. Idolatry seduces people away from God to worship other gods.

Blasphemous: This picture shows the world blaspheming against God. It does not fear God, it challenges Him.

Enemy of God and his people: In the parable of the sower, we see seed sown that looks like it's growing, but the growth is choked by the wealth and things of the world – Babylon does this in the human heart so that we become useless in the kingdom of God, so that we're spiritually asleep. We see a destruction that can lead people far from God.

2) Babylon's ride

This beast we have a picture of is the same beast we encounter in chapter 13. The picture is a contrast between that of Jesus riding a white horse.

Ungodly powers: The beast we see here is the antichrist. This is not one nation, organisation or system, but different and at different times.

Satanic power: The power of the beast comes from Satan and is trying to destroy the Lamb (chapter 17:14). The power and plans from the dragon, the devil are against the Lamb.

Destructive power: In chapter 17 we read that the beast will hate the city (v. 16). The antichrist is at work, trying to seduce people away from Jesus. This is a spiritual battle we see. Allies are fighting against each other. The purpose of the beast is to kill and to destroy.

Temporary power: (chapter 17:12). The power of the beast is constant, spiritual and multifaceted, but the power is temporary. What feels like a long time to us is not long at all in the light of eternity. What seems successful and invincible today is nothing against God. There might be more persecution to come, but the power of the devil cannot compare with God's power. The power of God's enemies is limited and it is temporary.

So don't be afraid – God's people might be in the hands of the devil for a short time, but soon you will be delivered.

3) Babylon's danger

Her wealth: Babylon's power and wealth is attractive. We like wealth and we like pleasure. As Christians, we might be tempted to compromise to get what we want. The church is in Babylon, in the world – there is a danger that the world appeals to our wicked hearts and then we become like the world.

Her pleasures: We enjoy sin and its pleasures. We don't like the aftermath, but we sin because we like it. We have the Holy Spirit in us, but we so easily give ourselves to sin as it appeals to the old self. The world looks so lovely and full of pleasure, but behind its apparent loveliness is a trap. Beware that if you share in the world's sin, you may share her plagues.

This was written for persecuted Christians, Christians who might have been tempted to give up their faith and attain some of the world's pleasures. But stand up for Jesus even if it's at cost to you. Stay faithful to Him and don't be seduced by the glitter of the world that leads to spiritual slumber and death.

4) **Babylon's fall**

God's judgment: This is God's judgement. This is not a coincidence – the world stands against God and the world will be punished by God. The world stands proudly against God, but no-one can stand against God and win. God's enemies are as ants before Him.

Certain judgment: The fall of this Babylon, this judgement, has not happened yet, but it is certain. As we can worship God now for the inheritance that will be ours, so we can worship Him now for His right judgement. God has declared this judgement will happen and so it is certain.

Sudden judgment: God's judgement will be sudden. The victory will be immediate – this is a serious warning for the enemies of God.

Eternal judgment: The judgement is eternal. All that stood against God will be no more. The world that seduces you to go away from God will be no more. There will be no more sin or suffering. The world will no longer lead us into temptation and rebellion.

The response of God's people to His judgement is rejoicing. It's a difficult battle that we're in. Let's be wise. We're in the world, but we're not of this world. God will deliver us, so be encouraged.