



Revelation 18

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Tape #8257
By Chuck Smith

Let's turn to the 18th chapter of the Book of Revelation. Last week in the 17th chapter, we looked at God's judgment upon the religious system, the false religious system, that the Lord called, mystery Babylon, the mother of harlots. And we realized that it wasn't the literal city of Babylon that was brought into the destruction but Babylon was used as the symbol for the false religious system because Babylon was the birthplace of false religions: Nimrod, Tammuz, Semiramis. The birthplace was in Babylon but the religious system spread throughout the world. So the false religious system was identified with Rome, the city on the seven hills.

Now we come into the judgment of God upon a second evil. False religion has destroyed so many lives. So many people are destroyed by false religion. Lives and people are destroyed by the commercialism, the enslaving of the souls of men in the commercialism of the world. Again, Babylon was the birthplace for commercialism. The first banks and all were established in Babylon and the heart and the seat of commercialism in the early years, and thus, it again is identified as Babylon but only because of the commercial center that Babylon once was. The Babylon of Chapter 18, I believe, will be the city where commercialism is centered in the time of the Antichrist. Just where that will be we do not yet know. It's interesting how that the flow of money seems to go from one area to another as time passes. The commercial center of the world seems to shift. The balance of commerce, the United States at one time, then, of course, Japan with all of its goods. It's shifting now to China. They're becoming a commercial giant. And, of course, with the oil, the Mid-east with all of the money that flowed into the Mid-east through the oil. So the money is sort of in flux and it just flows from one area to another.

It's interesting how that the commercial interests are able to sort of program our minds to feel that we've got to have a certain product. Look how they play with the minds of the children. Can you remember a few years ago when every child had to have a Cabbage Patch doll for Christmas and that these ugly little dolls were selling for humongous amounts? People were advertising in the paper "Genuine Cabbage dolls." And they were charging ten times the price that they paid for them. And then it became, Tickle Me Elmo, and all of the kids had to have the Tickle Me Elmo. Christmas won't be Christmas unless you get me a Tickle Me Elmo! So the parents were out going through the stores, calling, trying to find Tickle Me Elmo. Toys-R-Us, when they'd get the supply in there would be almost a riot and they'd be gobbled up immediately. There was a shortage, and I'm sure a contrived shortage in order to make the demand even greater. You know, TV, the little kids sit there watching the cartoons but then they know exactly what cereal they want when they go to the store. How they are being sold, their minds are already being programmed by the advertisements that they've got to have the certain product. They've got to have this certain toy, and they are sold that this product, this toy is going to make them Superman or Mighty Mouse or something. It's amazing the way our minds can be controlled by the advertisers.

You see, basically there is deep down within man a thirst for God. Jesus spoke about that in John 7:37. He said, "If any man thirst, let him come unto Me and drink." He was not talking about a physical thirst. He was not talking even of the emotional thirst, but He was talking about the thirst in the spirit of man for God. And He is saying, if you thirst, come to Me. You need God. Your soul, your spirit is thirsting after God. Come to Me and drink. "For he who drinks the water that I give, out of his innermost being there will gush torrents of living water." The thirst will be satisfied, plus.

Paul, in Romans, said that God has made man subject unto this emptiness and that by the design of Him who created him. That's just the way you were created. You can't help it. But the problem is, you can't satisfy the spiritual thirst with either a physical or material thing. Nor can you satisfy it with an emotional experience, but that's the great fallacy of the world today. Men are trying to satisfy the spiritual thirst with

material things.

Now, Madison Avenue recognizes this, and so as these advertisers draw up their programs, they play upon that thirst that is within the spirit of man but they make you think that that thirst can be satisfied if you are possessing a certain article, their product. And so they use this basic thirst within man to promote their product making you feel, this is what you need to find contentment and satisfaction. But you remember when Jesus was talking to the woman of Samaria there at the well, and He was asking her for a drink. And she said, "Why do You ask me for a drink? You're a Jew, I'm a Samaritan. We don't deal with each other." He said, "If you knew who it was that was asking you for a drink, and if you knew the gift of God, you'd be asking Him for a drink." And she said, "No, I wouldn't ask You for a drink. That well is deep. You don't have anything to draw with." And Jesus said, "Oh but if you drink of this water, you'll thirst again."

Now, that's true of every material possession. You know it's true. Everything that you have purchased up to this moment with the hope and the thought that it's going to bring you complete satisfaction. If I just have this, I'll never want anything else again. You know good and well that after you drank of that water, you thirsted again. It may have satisfied for a little while, but then you became conscious of that deep need for God once again. The same is true of emotional experiences. What a lie of Satan as he leads us from one emotional experience to another, and so many people get caught in this trap. They think that it lies with this new person that I've just discovered. And how many homes are broken? How many lives are ruined because of the lie of Satan that you can find the fulfillment in some emotional experience? And, of course, the amusement parks, the thrills of the new rides becoming more exotic all the time, but it doesn't satisfy. For the ninety seconds or so you're on there and you're being tossed and turned and spun upside down and everything else and you're screaming your head off, you may feel, whoa, this is great you know! But then the brakes are on and the thing stops and you have to get off. And where do we go now? And you can't satisfy that spiritual thirst with an emotional experience. The pleasure-mania that we have in the United States.

Look at The World Federation of Wrestling how they are seeking to even more and more make it an emotional experience. They promote this pleasure-mania; want to see him beat the tar out of that guy, you know. Bang him with the chairs, and what stupid referees they have. They're never at the right place at the right time. Excitement, yelling, screaming. Emotional experience. But then the fight is over. The game is over. Your team lost. Wait until next year. How many years have we Angel fans been waiting? Next year it's got to be better. But you might have a great emotional experience. Your team may have won in the last few seconds. I mean, look at the Michigan fans yesterday, wow. It came right down to the wire. And, oh, what rejoicing, but the poor Notre Dame fans, what a long, sad trip home. But so it is, the world. It offers, promises, but it doesn't fulfill.

You drink of the water, and you're thirsty again. But in offering you the hope of satisfaction, they've got their hand in your back pocket and you're paying dearly. You're going into debt, often times hopelessly into debt because of the promise of fulfillment. If you just had this car, this giant screen TV, or whatever they are promising you to bring you full satisfaction. And people go hopelessly in debt. It is an evil system that makes slaves of people. The banks freely offer you credit through the Visa or Master or Discover cards. They are constantly sending you out the letters that talk about your being pre-approved for the new credit card at a low interest rate to begin with but it always raises. And people become hopelessly in debt. The credit cards are all maxed out, and you're paying humongous interest but you're already over your head in debt. You become a slave, and God hates taking advantage of people. The whole commercial system that is designed to put people hopelessly in debt and to make them a slave to the lender, because the Scripture says the borrower is a slave to the lender. God hates that. And those things don't satisfy. They can't fill the spiritual thirst in your spirit for God. They can only temporarily disguise, but the thirst is still there. God created that thirst so that you would have to come to Him to find satisfaction. These substitutes are keeping you from coming to God. They prolong your journey, and thus God hates this crass commercialism that has become the substitute in so many peoples' lives for the genuine article; hoping be the emotion of the night or by the possession of a thing they can find the contentment and satisfaction but they thirst again. So God brings it into judgment in Chapter 18.

After these things I saw another angel [that is not one of the seven final angels with the bowls of God's wrath that are poured out in Chapter 16] but here is another angel coming down from heaven, having great power; and the earth was lightened with his glory. (18:1)

Angels are interesting and awesome beings. The Bible gives us a little insight into this realm of spirit beings that are called angels, created by God and created in various rankings and orders and some of them very powerful. We know that Lucifer, himself, at one time was an angel of God. He was the anointed cherub and a cherub is one of the high orders of angels. The anointed cherub that covereth, perfect in wisdom, perfect in beauty in all of his ways until the day that iniquity was found in him. (Ezek 28:12-15) And so these awesome created beings called angels. And here is one that comes down evidently an extremely powerful angel having great power and the whole earth is lighted. Now you remember in the pouring out of the bowls, one was the darkness that covered the earth. And now the earth is lightened with his glory.

He cried mightily with is strong voice, saying, Babylon the great is fallen, is fallen; and is become the habitation of devils, and the hold of every foul spirit, and a cage for every unclean and hateful bird. (18:2)

The unclean birds, hateful birds, in the Scriptures are emissaries of Satan. There's a rule of scriptural interpretation, and whenever the theologians get hold of things, they put big fancy words on to them. But it is called, this rule of interpretation, expositional constancy. Now what that means is that throughout the scripture, many times, there are things that are likened to something. And wherefore then you find this used in an analogous way, it is always of the same thing. In other words it wouldn't be of something good at one time and something evil of another. Leprosy is used in the scripture as a type of sin. So when ever you see leprosy used in an analogous way, it is always a type of sin. Birds in the scripture are a type of something that is evil, of Satan's work. You remember in the parable of the sower that went forth to sow the seed and it fell some by the wayside and the birds came and ate it up. Other of the seed fell among thorns and some among the stone any ground, and then the good soil. As Jesus was explaining that parable, He said, "That which is sown by the wayside is the word of God that fell but immediately Satan came and plucked it up so that it didn't penetrate into the heart of the person at all." And so the work of Satan, the birds. When you find birds used in a symbolism, it is always the work of Satan. So here the evil hateful birds, unclean birds inhabiting, now, this system that has been destroyed, that has fallen.

Now back in the 14th chapter, in verse 8, there was an angel that went around declaring Babylon is fallen, is fallen, the great city because she made all of the nations to drink of the wine of the wrath of her fornication. So the announcement of the fall of Babylon comes back in the 14th chapter. What we have here in the 18th chapter is an amplification of what was announced in the 14th chapter. The Book of Revelation does not always run in a consecutive order. It will carry you through a period, and then it will go back and it will give you greater detail of an earlier period that has already transpired. So here the declaration again that "Babylon is fallen, is fallen and become the habitation of devils, the hold of every foul spirit, and the age of every unclean and hateful bird."

For the nations have drunk of the wine of the wrath of her fornication, and the kings of the earth have committed fornication with her, and the merchants of the earth are waxed rich through the abundance of her delicacies. (18:3)

Now, again where this Babylon is yet to be determined. Whatever becomes the major commercial center once the Antichrist has taken control, that will be the city, that commercial city, that represents the commercialism of the world is the one that is coming in for judgment and for utter destruction that we read here in Revelation. "All of the nations have drunk of the wine of her fornication, the kings, the merchants."

I heard another voice from heaven, saying, Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues. (18:4)

It is interesting that throughout the Scriptures the people have been called to come out of this Babylonian system. Isaiah 48:20, "Go ye forth of Babylon, flee ye from the Chaldeans, with a voice of singing, declare ye, tell this, utter it even to the end of the earth; say ye, The Lord hath redeemed His servant Jacob." Isaiah 52:11, "Depart ye, depart ye, go ye out from thence, touch no unclean thing; go ye out of the midst of her; be ye clean, that bear the vessels of the Lord." Jeremiah 58, "Remove out of the midst of Babylon, and go forth out of the land of the Chaldeans, and be as the he goats before the flocks. For, lo, I will raise and cause to come up against Babylon, an assembly of great nations from the north country: and they shall set themselves in an array against her; from thence she shall be taken: their arrows shall be as of a mighty expert man; none shall return in vain." Jeremiah 51:6, "Flee out of the midst of Babylon, and deliver every man his soul: be not cut off in her iniquity; for this is the time of the Lord's vengeance; He will render unto her repayment.

Babylon has been a golden cup in the Lord's hand, that made all of the earth drunken: the nations have drunken of her wine; therefore the nations are insane. Babylon is suddenly fallen and destroyed: howl for her; take balm for her pain, if so be she may be healed." Zechariah said, "Oh, come forth, and flee from the land of the north, saith the Lord, for I have spread you abroad as the four winds of the heaven saith the Lord, deliver thyself, oh Zion, that dwell with the daughter of Babylon." And then in 2 Corinthians Paul said, "Wherefore come out from among them, be ye separate saith the Lord, touch not the unclean thing, I will receive you and I will be a father unto you, ye shall be My sons and daughters saith the Lord almighty." The worldly system, God calls His people out of it. Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world, for he that hath the love of the world in his heart has not the love of the Father. So this great commercial system, called Babylon, is to be destroyed. It falls. And we read here of the announcement, sort of a prayer, and we are not told who declares it, but it just says,

Her sins have reached unto heaven, and God hath remembered her iniquities. Reward her even as she rewarded you, and double unto her double according to her works: in the cup, which she hath filled fill to her double. How much she hath glorified herself, and lived deliciously, so much torment and sorrow give her: for she saith in her heart, I sit a queen, and am no widow, and shall see no sorrow. Therefore shall her plagues come in one day, death, mourning, famine; and she shall be utterly burned with fire: for strong is the Lord God who judgeth her. (18:5-8)

Now, there are commercial interests, there are men who control the banking of the world. They are power brokers, and their whole purpose is to bring you under their control and power. And they use commercialism to do it. They are sinister forces that are there. They are the power brokers. They are the ones who put our political leaders into office. They are the ones who pour the money into the elections, and they are the ones who really are in control. Don't think that president Clinton is in control. He's not even in control of his own emotions. But he is a pawn as are all of the world leaders. These men are behind the scenes controlling the issues, and God calls for judgment upon them. Reward her even as she has rewarded you, double according to her works, the cup, which she has filled to the double. Now, that's from the divine side that we view the destruction of Babylon. She's getting what she has coming. But from the human side,

The kings of the earth, [that is the leaders like we were mentioning] who have committed fornication and have lived deliciously with her, [these men that they have used, the pawns, that they have set up] shall bewail her, and lament for her when they see the smoke of her burning, standing afar off for the fear of her torment, saying, Alas, alas, that great city Babylon, that mighty city! for in one hour is thy judgment come. (18:9,10)

Whatever city it is, it could possibly be New York, but whatever city it is, it will be a great city. It will be the center of the commercial interests of the world. Wealthy. But the destruction will come in one hour. Now twice here we are told that they stand afar off for fear of the torment, which to me indicates that the city will probably be destroyed by an atomic bomb. The fear of the radiation causes people not to approach it but to stand back and to marvel that in one hour it was devastated. As I said, twice we'll find that

they are standing afar off because of the fear of the torment.

And the merchants of the earth shall weep [the rulers who have been put in power, they will weep] and mourn over her; for no man buys their merchandise any more: The merchandise of gold, silver, precious stones, and of pearls, fine linen, silk, and all thyine wood, and all manner vessels of ivory, and all manner vessels of most precious wood, and of brass, and iron, and marble, the perfumes, the cinnamon, and odours, and ointments, and frankincense, and wine, and oil, and fine flour, and wheat, and beasts, and sheep, and horses, and chariots, and slaves, and souls of men. [People merchandising in these things.] The fruits that thy soul lusted after are departed from thee, (18:11-14a)

You see, this is what they do, they create in you a lust for these things. And people become controlled and ruled by their lusts, rather than by their minds. God gave you an intellect, the capacity to reason. You were created in the image of God, and God intended that you reason things out. My one granddaughter, when she was a little girl had done something and I was just commenting on how smart she was. You're so smart to figure that out. And I was just sort of extolling on her wisdom in figuring it out. And she said, grandpa, God gave me a "b-wain" and he wants me to use it. And she was so right. God's given us a brain and He wants us to use it. He wants us to think things through. Come now let's reason together saith the Lord. Offer your body as a living sacrifice, which is your reasonable service. But Satan seeks to control you by your lust. That is why people, even smart people, intelligent people, can do such stupid things because they don't use their minds. They are not controlled by their minds, but they are controlled by their emotions and by their lusts. So the advertisers create within you a lust for fancy jewelry, verse 12, the gold, silver, precious stones, pearls, fancy clothes, fine linen, silk. The fancy furniture's made of the thyine wood and manner of vessels of ivory, precious woods, brass, iron, and marble. The perfumes, you know, it always amazes me when they come out with these statistics, I never remember them, but of how much money is annually spent in the United States on perfume, deodorants and that kind of thing. The gourmet foods, the fancy cars, the horses and chariots, and the chariots were the sports cars of those days.

And the slaves and the souls of men, the merchandising of people. The souls of men. The money that is being made in prostitution, the money that is being made in the selling of children, many times being sold for sexual purposes. A tremendous problem exists in Thailand where the merchants will go in through the back country where the poverty is so great, and they'll buy the little girls from the families who are nine, ten, eleven years old, and they will bring them into Bangkok for purposes of making money off of them. In Europe they have sex tours, and these men go to Bangkok in order to have sex with these little girls. And the same is true with little boys. And this merchandising even of the souls of men, this whole corrupt system, is coming down and none too soon.

The fruits that thy soul lusted after are departed from thee, and all of the things which were dainty and goodly are departed from thee, and thou shalt find them no more at all. (18:14)

God is going to wipe out this whole system. In the Kingdom Age when Jesus comes to reign, we read in Isaiah, "Ho, everyone that thirsteth, come to the waters. Come, buy without money." Take it. It's yours. It's free. Commercialism will be gone. The earth is the Lord's and the fullness thereof. And it will be there for men. Buy without money, it says. That whole commercial system will be gone and there will be that glorious Kingdom of God where there will be an abundance for everyone and no one will be enslaved to debt.

But the merchants of these things, which were made rich by her, shall stand afar off for the fear of her torment, [there you have it the second time] and they are weeping and wailing, and saying, Alas, alas, that great city, that was clothed in fine linen, and purple, and scarlet, and decked with gold, and precious stones, and pearls! For in one hour [again the quickness of the destruction] so

great riches is come to nothing. And every shipmaster, [now, first of all the people that have been put into power, the kings, they will be wailing, then the merchants] but then also it comes down to the shipmasters, and all the company in ships, and sailors, and as many as trade by the sea, they stood afar off. And they cried when they saw the smoke of her burning, saying, What city is like unto this great city! And they cast dust on their heads, and cried, weeping and wailing, saying, Alas, alas, that great city, wherein were made rich all that had ships in the sea by reason of her costliness! for in one hour is she made desolate. [So, the threefold, actually of the kings, of the merchants, of the sailors.] (18:15-19)

Now, that's the earthly view of the destruction. Weeping, wailing. Why? Because it's over. All of the tremendous riches that have been amassed through this commercial system, is over. But from the heavenly scene it says,

Rejoice over her, thou heaven, and ye holy apostles and prophets; for God has avenged you on her. And a mighty angel took up a stone like a great millstone, and cast it into the sea, saying, Thus with violence shall that great city Babylon be throne down, and shall be found no more at all. And the voice of the harpers, and musicians, the pipers, and trumpeters, shall be heard no more at all in thee; no craftsman, of whatsoever craft he be shall be found any more in thee; and the sound of a millstone shall be heard no more at all in thee; and the light of a candle shall shine no more at all in thee; and the voice of the bridegroom and of the bride shall be heard no more at all in thee: for thy merchants were the great men of the earth; for by thy sorceries were all nations deceived. And in her was found the blood of prophets, and of saints, and all that were slain upon the earth. (18:20-24)

It is interesting to me how that the commercial and the advertisers promote so much evil in the world today. How people are being made rich through pornography, the merchandising of pornography. How people are being made rich by these ungodly forces and how that so many of them are being taken over by ungodly people and use the prophets for ungodly purposes. There is a war against God, and the commercial interests are at war against God. Levi-Strauss Company cut off their support to the Boy Scouts of America because the Boy Scouts of America would not allow homosexual leaders. The Bank of America did the same but they sort of backed off because of the tremendous amount of tumult that was created. A lot of people with draw their accounts from the Bank of America, and they saw the folly of it. But Wells Fargo hung on to the position and refused to support any longer the Boy Scouts, because of that homosexual issue. But they're using the money to fight against the righteous principles that God has established and should be represented in His church and by God's people.

But, good news, it's almost over! Next week we enter into Chapter 19 when the kingdoms of this world become the kingdom of our Lord and of His Christ, and what a radical change is going to take place when God's kingdom comes! I can hardly wait! If the Lord tarries, we'll be here next Sunday night, and if he doesn't, all the better! It will soon be over.

Father, we thank You for the hope that we have of the coming kingdom, the Kingdom of God, the reign of our Lord Jesus Christ as He comes to reign over the earth as King of Kings and Lord of Lords. The judgments fulfilled and now the time of the glorious reign, Lord, we do pray that Your kingdom would come and that the day will soon come when Your will is being done here on earth even as Your will is done in heaven. And Lord, we pray that we might be faithful walking, Lord, in truth, using Lord, the capacities that You have given to us to think things through, rather than just following our lust and being guided by our emotions. Lord, help us to reason things out and to look at the end result of sin in the path of the lust and realize they are death. Bless, Lord we pray. In Jesus' name, Amen.