

Come Out! – Rev. 18:4

I. INTRODUCTION

A. *Alexander The Great & The Lesser*

1. There's a story that comes down to us from the career of Alexander the Great.
2. Alexander was not the kind of commander who was comfortable running his army from a distance; he liked to be in the thick of things.
3. So one night he decided to check the perimeter of the camp.
4. As he made his way to the different watch stations, he encouraged the sentries to stay vigilant.
5. But coming to one post, he found the sentry fast asleep.
6. Now, the penalty for such a gross dereliction of duty is death.
 - a. by falling asleep at one's post, you endanger the lives of thousands of your fellow soldiers.
 - b. so the wartime penalty is immediate execution –
 - c. and this young soldier knew that he wasn't long for this world as he stared into the eyes of a very angry Alexander the Great.
7. The commander asked him, "What's your name?" To which the sentry replied with a trembling voice, "Alexander."
8. At that point, a visible change took place in the king's posture and facial expression.
9. He seemed to soften a bit – then said with renewed intensity – "Son, change your behavior, or change your name!"

B. **"Change Your Behavior, Or Change Your Name!"**

1. It was because of a *name* that young sentry's life was spared –
2. He shared the same name as his Commander.
3. And in a rare moment of *mercy*, Alexander the Great gave him an opportunity to turn things around.
4. "Change your behavior, or change your name!"
 - a. the name "Alexander" wasn't fit being attached to such gross negligence.
 - b. the name *meant* something – and that something needed to be lived up to.
5. Hebrews 2:10 calls Jesus the "*Captain, the Commander of our*

Salvation.”

- a. as *our* Commander makes His way through the camp of God’s Army called *the Church*,
- b. I wonder how many of those who are called by His name, “Christian” are asleep at their post.
- c. or how many have wandered from the camp into enemy-territory.
- d. it’s to this very thing we turn in our study this morning.

II. TEXT

A. *Setting The Scene*

1. Rev. 17 & 18 describe *the Fall of Babylon*
 - a. the difficulty for students of Revelation has been sorting out just what John means by *Babylon*.
 - b. after all – we know these visions are of the end of days.
 - c. in fact, this section of the book details the very end of the Tribulation, just prior to the Lord’s Return.
 - d. so how are we to understand John’s reference to “Babylon” here?
 - e. even in John’s day, the ancient City of Babylon was nothing but a pile of rubble.
 - f. and the way he describes Babylon’s fall in these 2 chapters, we realize he’s speaking of far more than just a city.
2. In our study on Wednesday night in two weeks, we’ll fully develop this but this morning let me just summarize what John means by *Babylon* in chs. 17 & 18.
 - a. by taking all of the various passages which speak of Babylon in the Bible, and doing a little historical research, we quickly draw the conclusion that Babylon stands as the archetypical symbol of the world-system in rebellion against God.
 - b. Babylon was the first earthly city established by people inspired by satan.
 - c. when the first Babylon crumbled to ruins, the world-system didn’t pass away, it just moved to the next city, the next location and power center among the kingdoms of man.
3. The NT makes regular reference to “the world” by which it means the world-system hostile to God.

- a. it describes all human society that rejects God and finds its inspiration and wisdom in the subtle and insidious lies of the devil.
- b. it's a continuation of the Fall and holding on to the deceit that it's through *knowledge* than man can promote himself and achieve practical deity.
- c. we see it in such passages as 1 John 2:15 -

15 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.

- 1) by "world" John does not mean the *physical planet*.
 - 2) the word is "kosmos" and refers to an *ordered system* – the *world-system!*
4. We see this world-system that's opposed to God in popular media
 - a. Hollywood is mostly dominated by the world mind
 - b. most television programming is nothing but a promotion of the world
 - c. magazines are filled with articles and glossy photos which portray a way of living void of God
 - d. civil government disregards God's law as they make their own
 - e. much of the economy is driven by greed
 - f. humanism in all it's manifestations; scientism, materialism, naturalism, evolution, secular psychology, all of these are an attempt to raise man to the level of deity.
 - g. the *false religions* of the world; even something as simple as *peer-pressure*;
 - h. all that appeals to men and women to define themselves by the lusts of the flesh is a manifestation of the world.
 5. In the Bible, *Babylon* becomes a fitting idiom and symbol for the world-system.
 - a. in the Book of Genesis, *it's the first city*, established by evil men in league with satan who sought to oppose God.
 - b. so here in Revelation, at the *end of history* it becomes a ready image of the entire world system that stands opposed to Him.
 - c. the seed planted on the plains of Shinar 5000 years ago in the first Babel has grown into hideous weed that covers the earth.
 - d. and in these chapters, we see God coming with some heavenly

Round-Up and a Weed-whacker to take it down.

6. In ch. 17, John describes Babylon as a foul, corrupt, and blasphemous world-wide religious system allied with the antichrist's kingdom.
7. Then in ch. 18, the image of Babylon *changes* into a world-wide commercial entity that values economic wealth and luxury above all things.
8. The important point for us to glean this morning, and which we'll develop in much greater and clearer detail in our Wednesday study in 2 weeks – is that *Babylon* represents the World-System that hates and rejects God.

B. Vs. 1-5

¹After these things I saw another angel coming down from heaven, having great authority, and the earth was illuminated with his glory. ²And he cried mightily with a loud voice, saying, “Babylon the great is fallen, is fallen, and has become a dwelling place of demons, a prison for every foul spirit, and a cage for every unclean and hated bird! ³For all the nations have drunk of the 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.”

⁴And I heard another voice from heaven saying, “Come out of her, my people, lest you share in her sins, and lest you receive of her plagues. ⁵For her sins have reached to heaven, and God has remembered her iniquities.

1. My message this morning is similar to last week's and focuses on v. 4.
2. After seeing the destruction of the last day's religious system in ch. 17, John is shown the destruction of the world's *economic & commercial* system in ch. 18.
3. This is that system the antichrist and false prophet have constructed during the Tribulation through the *mark of the beast*.

4. Without that mark, a person cannot buy or sell or enter into the supposed benefits of the last day's commercial system.
5. *American Express* had a marketing campaign not too long ago with a tag line that has remained their slogan – “Membership has its rewards.”
 - a. their *pitch* was that being an *American Express* cardholder entitled you to things others did not enjoy.
 - b. and there was simply a sense of being *superior* because you were “in” the *American Express Club*.
6. Such will be the appeal of having the mark of the beast.
 - a. it's the promise of entering into a unique, elite group.
 - b. it's the pledge of a system that rewards its members with material prosperity & luxury.
 - c. it's a system that seeks to define life by *how much* one possesses.
 - d. as we read on in ch. 18 we see that this system is driven by greed and the lust for material possessions.
 - e. it bends the law and allows injustice, all for the sake of monetary gain.
 - f. it makes merchandise of people, turning the weak and innocent into objects to be bought and sold and used for carnal pleasure.
 - g. it reduces the important things of life to clothing, food, and entertainment.
7. In v. 4, John hears God cry out a warning from heaven.
 - a. as He is now ready to thrust in His sickle and knock down the weed of the world-system,
 - b. He first issues a call to His people to make sure they are not sitting in its branches.

4And I heard another voice from heaven saying, “Come out of her, my people, lest you share in her sins, and lest you receive of her plagues.”

8. Last week, we saw the Lord's warning in 16:15; “*Watch out!*”
9. Here He says, “*Come out!*”
 - a. “come out of the world! Be separate!”
 - b. “don't get caught up in the world's sins.”
 - c. “don't let your presence *in* the world color you and influence your thinking and living.”

- d. “you are MY people – not the world’s people, so don’t define your lives by the world’s ways.”
10. As with our text last week – these words are aimed *specifically* at those believers who will have managed to dodge the antichrist’s reign of terror and persecution.
 - a. God is telling them that while the world-system seems so powerful and invincible
 - b. in fact, it’s about to be wiped out in a *moment of judgment*.
 - c. so they must make sure they have not gotten caught up in it, or they may get caught up in it’s judgment.
 - d. they mustn’t go along to get along; they mustn’t yield to the pressure to fit in.
 - e. they are *saints* – set-apart ones – and must maintain their distance and separation from the corruption of the world.
 11. Though these words speak *specifically* to the Tribulation saints, they also speak to us, for we too live in the World; in the midst of a system that is corrupt and at work 24/7 to seduce us away from our love for Christ.
 12. In fact, what the Lord says here in v. 4 is *nothing new*;
 13. The call to depart from Babylon and the worldliness it represents is a theme repeated frequently in scripture [\[1\]](#)

Isaiah 52:11 • Depart! Depart! Go out from there, touch no unclean thing; go out from her, be clean, you who bear the vessels of the LORD.

Jeremiah 50:8 • Flee from the midst of Babylon, and everyone save his life!

Jeremiah 51:45 • My people, go out of the midst of her! And let everyone deliver himself from the fierce anger of the LORD.

14. The Apostle Paul gave frequent exhortations to believers to guard themselves from being entangled in and with the world -

2 Corinthians 6:14 • Do not be unequally yoked together with unbelievers. For what fellowship has righteousness with lawlessness?

Ephesians 5:11 • Have no fellowship with the unfruitful

works of darkness, but rather expose them.

C. Be Holy

1. I think of Peter's solemn echo of the words of God in 1 Peter 1 where he wrote -

¹³Therefore gird up the loins of your mind, be sober, and rest *your* hope fully upon the grace that is to be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ; ¹⁴as obedient children, not conforming yourselves to the former lusts, as in your ignorance; ¹⁵but as He who called you *is* holy, you also be holy in all *your* conduct, ¹⁶because it is written, "Be holy, for I am holy.**"**

- a. the word "holy" means *set-apart*.
 - b. if something is holy, it means it's set apart from common use for the special use and purposes of God.
 - c. when God calls His people to be holy, it means they are to separate themselves from the base and corrupt things of this fallen world, realizing they've been saved for a special purpose – a sacred and holy destiny, and that is to be His eternal companion.
2. Actually, Peter's words here give us an important insight in *how* we can do what God calls us to do in Rev. 18:4 when He says "Come out of Babylon. Come out of the world ."
 3. First of all, Peter says –

Gird up the loins of your mind, be sober . . .

- a. the "loins" refer to the seat and center of reproduction
- b. the "loins of the mind" speak of the birth-place of our actions;
- c. our actions, our lifestyle is the manifestation of our *thoughts* – of what's *birthed* in our minds
- d. when Peter says "Gird up the loins of your mind, be sober," he means we need to gather up our thoughts and think clearly.
- e. we must guard our minds from being deluded by the intoxicating effects of this world's enticements
- f. Paul says much the same thing in Romans 12:2 –

Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind.

- g. and how do we renew our minds? By reading, studying, and applying God's Word?
 - 1) so often people will share with me how they're struggling with some sin
 - 2) there's some worldly lust or enticement that they seem to be powerless in overcoming
 - 3) when I ask if they're consistently spending time in the Word and prayer, the answer is usually, "I just don't have time." Or they have some other excuse.
- h. both Peter and Paul are clear here –
- i. the key to victory over the appeal of the world is the renewing of our minds – and that takes place by the diligent study and application of God's Word.
- j. there is simply no shortcut to holiness!
- k. there's a story that comes to us from Homer's *Odyssey* that well illustrates this
 - 1) Ulysses and his men were sailing through the region of the Sirens
 - 2) they were beautiful creatures with melodic voices that if listened to drove men mad with desire
 - 3) in their madness, they would then drive their ships onto the perilous rocks and drown
 - 4) Ulysses filled his sailor's ears with wax and had them tie him fast to the mast, lest he try to regain control of the ship and drive it onto the rocks.
 - 5) this way they were able to negotiate the region of the Sirens safely.
- l. this world is filled with voices which seek to seduce us to turn from our love for and devotion to Christ and instead expend our lives in pursuing carnal pleasure.
- m. everywhere we turn, the siren-song of lust is loud and clear.
 - 1) TV, radio, magazines
 - 2) virtually every store
 - 3) peer pressure
 - 4) just coming here this morning there were dozens of voices that sang out their seductive song of promised pleasure and satisfaction
 - 5) and when you leave, there will be just as many.

- n. we must be like Ulysses and tie ourselves to the Lord with the bonds of His word.
 - o. we must ask the Lord to pour the wax of His Spirit into our ears so that the siren song of this world is muted and filtered through His truth.
 - p. yesterday Marshall Foster spoke about the need of parents to spend time with their children teaching them the ways of the Lord
 - 1) why? because those children are being taught by and influenced by the world without let up.
 - 2) by the time a child is 17, if his/her goes to church weekly, that means they will have had about 850 hours of religious instruction!
 - 3) but they will also have had about 18,000 hours or worldly instruction through the television – to say nothing of school.
4. Then Peter says -

and rest *your* hope fully upon the grace that is to be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ;

- a. as we considered last week, one of the surest way to overcome the seductive influences of the world is to keep the Lord's coming at the forefront of our thinking.
 - b. that's what Peter says here – keep your hope in the coming of Christ bright and fresh
 - c. today could be the day! As each new day dawns and you rise from bed, remind yourself – today could be the day Jesus comes for me!
 - d. and if a month of days passes, or a year, or a decade, and He hasn't – don't be discouraged or feel cheated – on the contrary – you will then be **THAT MUCH CLOSER TO THE DAY** when Jesus does come!
5. Look here; v. 14 -

¹⁴as obedient children, not conforming yourselves to the former lusts, as in your ignorance; ¹⁵but as He who called you *is* holy, you also be holy in all *your* conduct, ¹⁶because it is written, “Be holy, for I am holy.”

- a. there was a time when we were part of the world.

- b. we were lost sinners, without hope and purpose.
- c. when we were *of* the world, we ordered our lives *by* the world, according to it's lusts
- d. but Christ lifted us out of the moral mud & mire of the world.
- e. and as His people – we are to be what we are – the holy people of God!
- f. Paul says it this way in Ephesians 2

¹You He made alive, who were dead in trespasses and sins, ²in which you once walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit who now works in the sons of disobedience, ³among whom also we all once conducted ourselves in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, just as the others.

- 6. Paul reveals here the master-mind that orchestrates the world – it's satan.
 - a. Babylon, the world-system is a puppet whose strings he pulls.
 - b. it moves at his direction.
 - c. and before we came to Christ, we were a part of that system whether we recognized it or not.
- 7. But faith in Christ, being saved, means being transferred from the world to the Kingdom of God.
 - a. no longer do we move at the devil's bidding; God has cut those strings and set us free.
 - b. His call here in Rev. 18:4 is to separate from those things that are *incompatible* with our new life in Christ,
 - c. things that are more of our past in the world than our present and glorious destiny in the Lord.

III. CONCLUSION

A. The New Life

- 1. I was listening this week to a speech by J. Edwin Orr.
- 2. Before his death a few years ago, Orr was the foremost authority on Revival and was in his own right a gifted evangelist and preacher.

3. Orr made the study of spiritual awakenings his life's work and his knowledge of revival was encyclopedic.
4. In speaking on the nature of conversion he related a meeting he had recently been at where he spoke to a large crowd about how the Gallup organization reported that in a period of 5 years the percentage of those in the US claiming to be born again went up from 46 to 53%.
 - a. the crowd broke out in enthusiastic applause.
 - b. but he quickly hushed them by saying, "I don't believe it!"
 - c. "What would our nation be like if 53% were truly born again?"
 - d. that challenge brought an uneasy quiet to the crowd.
5. Orr went on to say that there's something missing from much of the modern preaching of the gospel today – and that's the call to *repentance*.
 - a. it seems many are more interested in simply gaining *numbers* rather than *converts*.
 - b. "The evidence of the new-birth is new life," said Orr, "and if there is no new life, then it's doubtful there's been a new birth."
6. Look again at what the Lord says -

**"Come out of her, my people, lest you share in her sins,
and lest you receive of her plagues.**

B. Don't Look Back!

1. I want to end this morning by taking a look at just what it means to be a Christian.
2. What does it mean to be a follower of Christ?
3. In Luke 9:59-62 we find this interesting challenge

59Then He said to another, "Follow Me." But he said,
"Lord, let me first go and bury my father."

60Jesus said to him, "Let the dead bury their own dead,
but you go and preach the kingdom of God."

61And another also said, "Lord, I will follow You, but let me
first go *and* bid them farewell who are at my house."

62But Jesus said to him, "No one, having put his hand to
the plow, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of

God.”

4. Jesus is not being petty or harsh here.
5. What these men were asking was permission to follow Him *at their own convenience and whim*.
 - a. they were asking for Jesus to accommodate Himself to THEIR schedules,
 - b. rather than taking Him as their Lord & Master and surrendering their lives completely to Him.
 - c. the first guy put his *family* before the Lord while the second put his *friends* before Him.
 - d. Jesus made it crystal clear – following Him is a commitment that sees every other relationship take a distance second to.
6. Being a Christian – a real Christian means looking to Christ and never looking back!
7. Christian - Are you looking back?
 - a. have you heard the challenge to follow Christ but the world still fascinates you?
 - b. whose voice is *clearer* this morning – the siren-song of lust and greed or the Voice of the Spirit?
8. This is a challenge all of us need to face this morning – because the Lord could come for the Church at any moment.
9. And then follows a time a judgment the likes of which have never been seen before.
10. As Lot and his family were hastening away from the City of Sodom, Mrs. Lot began to lag behind.
 - a. though she'd heard the warning of the angels that judgment was about to fall,
 - b. still she regretted leaving her home and friends and the luxurious life she'd know in Sodom.
 - c. she took her eyes off the safety & refuge the hills before her promised, and turned her gaze *longingly* back toward Sodom.
 - d. and turning back, she was caught in the judgment of the city.
 - e. “Remember Lot's wife!”
11. One day, Babylon will fall.
 - a. this world-system which hates and opposes God and His people will come crashing down.
 - b. those who love it will be caught in it's ruin.
 - c. don't be a Babylonian – be a Christian!

[\[1\]](#) Guzik, David