

No Babylonians! • Revelation 18:4

INTRO • Alexander the Great & Lesser

- Alexander the Great was a soldier's General.
 - He fought **alongside** his troops.
 - He didn't sit on his horse at a safe distance watching from afar. He led from the front.
- The story goes late 1 night while he decided to check the perimeter of the camp.
- As he made his way to the different watch stations, he encouraged the sentries to stay vigilant.
- But at 1 post, he found the sentry fast asleep.
- As any soldier knows, the penalty for such a gross dereliction of duty is **death**.
- Alexander woke the sleeping sentry who when he realized it was his Commander, knew his life was forfeit.
 - Alexander asked, "What's your name?"
 - The sentry replied w/trembling voice, "Alexander."
- Alexander the Great paused, then said, "Son, change your behavior, or change your name!"
"Change Your Behavior, or Change Your Name!"
 - That sentry's life was spared because his name was the same as his commander's.
 - That name **meant** something; and that something needed to be lived up to.
 - Heb 2:10 says Jesus is the "the Captain/**Commander** of our Salvation."
 - His Spirit is here today, walking the lines to make sure we're awake & watching – as we saw last week.
 - The message today is similar to last week's.
 - We who are **called Christians**, bear the **name of Christ**.
 - Let's honor that name in how we live.

Set the Scene

- We're looking at just 1 verse today. But as always, we need to set the scene.
- The opening ch of Job makes it clear the devil can't do anything unless God permits him.
 - Satan's on a leash.
 - But in Rev. what we see is the time when God lets the devil **off** that leash.
 - The Tribulation is going to be off the hook – but not in a good way.
 - Satan's whole ambition has been to be like God.
 - So the Tribulation is when he gets his chance to give it his best shot.
 - He apes everything God is and does. He goes for total control.
- So as we've been tracking John's vision s of the end times, we've seen the devil set up a world ruler who seeks to gain control of the entire planet.
 - He sets up his own economic, political, military & even religious system.
 - That whole system gets lumped under the name Babylon in chs 17 & 18,
 - Which describe it's ultimate demise.
 - Ch. 17 is the ruin of **Religious** Babylon. Ch. 18 is the fall of the **Economic & Political** Babylon.
- Students of the Bible have long wondered why God refers to the end times world-system as **Babylon**.
 - In the 1st C when John wrote this, the ancient City of Babylon was nothing but a pile of rubble.
 - Well, remember: The key for understanding Rev. is the OT.
 - And throughout the OT, Babylon was the grand-daddy of Man's rebellion against God.
 - So much so that when the city of Jerusalem turned against God, the prophets called IT Babylon!
 - Babylon was the first great Human city after the Flood.
 - It's where they built a tower in defiance of God and God scattered them by confusing their languages.
 - In the end times, Humanity will re-unite & try again to define themselves apart from God.
 - So God uses the title **Babylon** to define Man's last great rebellion.
 - It's a convenient idiom for "The World of Rebel Man in league with Satan."
- In Chs. 17 & 18 it all goes down!
 - In ch. 17 we see the ruin of **Religious** Babylon.
 - Ch. 18 is the demolition of **Economic & Political** Babylon.

Vs. 1-5

¹ After these things I saw another angel coming down from heaven, having great authority, and the earth was illuminated with his glory. ² And 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! ³ For 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.” ⁴ And 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. ⁵ For her sins have reached to heaven, and God has remembered her iniquities.

1. In our next Wed study in Rev. we'll cover BOTH chs. 17 & 18 and get into a lot more detail.
2. This morning, we're going to concentrate just on v. 4.
3. John sees a powerful angel descend from heaven, announcing the **end** of Babylon.
 - a. It has a long history of being the center & seat of demonic corruption.
 - b. Its influence has spread to the ends of the Earth.
 - c. It's an engine of wealth to the merchants of the world.
 - d. But now it's come crashing down.
 - 1) The angel says, “Babylon the great is fallen, is fallen.”
 - 2) He's not stuttering. He repeats it to make sure everyone understands it's over!
 - 3) Babylon will never rise again.
 - 4) It will in the end times under the reign of the Antichrist.
 - 5) But when THAT Last Days falls in the judgment of God, it falls to never rise again.
 - 6) Satan gave it his best shot. But now God takes him down for good.
4. BECAUSE the World is going down, in v. 4, John tells us what He heard God Himself say from heaven. “Come out of her, my people, lest you share in her sins, and lest you receive of her plagues.”
5. Last week, we saw the warning in 16:15; “**Watch out!**” // Here He says, “**Come out!**”
6. God calls His people to come **out of** Babylon; that is, out of the World-system in rebellion against God.
7. While v. 4 is directed specifically to those who come to faith in Christ during the Tribulation, it applies to all God's people in every generation.
 - a. There will be thousands, maybe even millions who come to faith in Jesus during the Tribulation.
 - b. As we've already seen, the pressure to go along with the antichrist's system will be fierce.
 - c. Unless people take his mark, they won't be able to buy or sell.
 - d. The pressure will be on from all over to worship & serve the antichrist.
 - e. But many will refuse & pledge themselves to Christ; being persecuted & even executed.
 - f. As the pressure mounts to give in, they will hear God's voice from heaven calling them to faithfulness.
8. We must hear & heed that voice today.
 - a. We don't face the pressure those Tribulation saints will.
 - b. But, it's looking more and more like we will indeed face pressure to back down from our commitment to God & His Word.
 - c. The Gospel has never been popular but now it's being cast as seditious & hateful.
 - d. And as you well know, there ARE places in the world TODAY, where being a Christian can get you killed.
9. So this word is for us too.

1 John 2:15–17 • 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. ¹⁶ 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. ¹⁷ And the world is passing away, and the lust of it; but he who does the will of God abides forever.

 - a. By “world” John doesn't mean Earth, the physical planet.
 - b. God created the Earth good. We're to enjoy creation.
 - c. This word “world” is “kosmos” = an ordered-system.
 - 1) It's order that **replaces chaos**.
 - 2) It's where the word **cosmetics** comes from; to bring order from chaos. Just sayin'
 - d. See, what John means by world is the world-**system** that's under the control of the devil.
 - 1) Remember, the Bible calls him the god of this age. [2 Cor 4:4]
 - 2) The prince of the power of the air who works in & thru rebel man. [Eph 2:2]

- e. We encounter that system in the media, government, schools, at the mall, in the conversations that go on between people.
- f. It all conspires to pressure us to go along.
- g. It says, “Do **this** and you’ll be happy.” // “**This** is success.” // **Here’s** power & significance.”
- 10. WE know everything we need is in Christ & He alone.
- 11. But the world works overtime trying to distract us & get us to fit in.
- 12. So God says, “Come out of the world! Be separate!”
 - a. “Don’t get caught up in the world’s vain pursuit of happiness & fulfillment.”
 - b. “You are **MY people**; not the world’s, so don’t define your lives by the its ways.”
- 13. This is why the NT calls believers **saints**.
 - a. The word means to be set-apart.
 - b. It’s the essence of what God says here when he calls His people to come OUT.
 - c. That doesn’t mean we’re to **physically relocate** to a commune in the desert.
 - d. God isn’t calling us to sell our homes in the city, load up a U-Haul & drive out into the Mojave.
 - e. He’s not even telling us to get rid of our TV & cut Cable.
 - f. What he means is that we’re not to buy into the world’s way of thinking & living.
- 14. Being a Christian means being like Jesus.
 - a. Jesus didn’t conduct his mission in the wilderness. // He didn’t start a commune.
 - b. Yes, He **began** his mission by spending 40 days alone in the wilderness, but that was all so that He could make sure when He went back to the City, that City wouldn’t get it’s hooks into Him.
 - c. Jesus entire ministry was conducted around towns and cities.
 - d. He exemplified for us what it means to be IN the world but not OF the World.
- 15. When God calls us to come OUT of the World, He means out of its values & priorities, INTO those of His Kingdom.

Be Holy – 1 Pet 1 [turn]

1. In 1 Peter 1 we read ...

¹³ Therefore 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; ¹⁴ as obedient children, not conforming yourselves to the former lusts, *as* in your ignorance; ¹⁵ but as He who called you *is* holy, you also be holy in all *your* conduct, ¹⁶ because it is written, “**Be holy, for I am holy.**”

- a. “Holy” is same word we get the word saint from = *set-apart*.
- b. If something is holy, it’s set apart from common use for the purposes of God.
- c. When God calls us to be holy, it means we’re to stand away from any & everything that would disqualify or make us unfit to be used by God.
- 2. Really, Peter tells us here HOW to do what God says in v4 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” are the place of reproduction.
 - b. The “loins of the mind” means the **birth-place** of our actions.
 - c. What we **do** is the product of what we **think**.
 - d. Peter calls us **guard our minds** from being deluded by the intoxicating effects of this world’s enticements.
 - e. In Rom 12:2 Paul says much the same thing

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

 - f. We renew our minds by careful attention to God’s Word.
 - 1) This is why what we’re doing right now is SOOO important.
 - 2) Why your time in the Word is so important.
 - 3) We face a **daily barrage** from the world, trying to **hijack** our thoughts.
 - a) Radio, TV, ads
 - b) Chit-chat of the lost.
 - 4) So we need that time daily when we can center on God and His Word & renew a heavenly perspective.

- g. You've heard the story from Homer's *Odyssey* that illustrates this.
 - 1) Ulysses and his crew sailed thru the region of the **Sirens**.
 - 2) They were beautiful creatures w/voices that if listened to drove men mad w/desire.
 - 3) They'd then drive their ships onto the rocks & drown.
 - 4) Ulysses filled the crew's ears w/wax & had them tie him to the mast.
 - h. The World has the Siren's song down!
 - 1) It knows how to entice even the most determined saint.
 - 2) Listen better people than you & I have gone astray and made shipwreck of their faith.
 - 3) Like Ulysses let's tie ourselves to the Lord w/the bonds of His Word.
 - 4) Let's ask God to pour the wax of His Spirit into our ears so the world's voice is muted by His truth.
 - i. Parents, teach your children the Word & Ways of God.
 - 1) If a child goes to church weekly, by the time he/she is 17, they will have had abt 850 hrs of religious instruction.
 - 2) But they will also have had 18K hrs or the world's indoctrination just thru the TV.
- 30 That doesn't even include what they're learning at 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. Keep your hope in the coming of Christ fresh.
 - b. We're not likely to **hook up** w/sin if we remember we could be **caught up** at any moment.
 5. Peter goes on ...

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

 - a. We ought to be what we are, the holy people of God!
 - b. Now, when I say that, I know what many are thinking "Where's the fun in that?"
 - c. Not many people would connect holiness with fun.
 - d. This is all part of the massive propaganda campaign the devil's managed to spread against God.
 - e. That holiness means a life of stilted religious drudgery & mind-numbing boredom.
 - f. And that fun is to be had in what the world offers.
 - g. Happiness is something the world controls.
 - h. ***That's exactly backwards!***
 - 1) The sin the world dolls up and makes look so good is a lie & cheat that will lead to nothing but sorrow and pain.
 - 2) While Holiness is the pathway to all true, lasting joy, fulfillment & eternal satisfaction.
 - i. Never forget this TRUTH:
 - God loves you and wants to bless you forever, starting right now!
 - The devil utterly hates you and wants to send you to torment forever, starting right now!
 - God will only and always tell you the truth, even when it's hard to hear.
 - The devil will only & always lie.

CONCLUSION

1. In Rev. 18:4 God says ...
"Come out of her, my people, lest you share in her sins, and lest you receive of her plagues.
2. God's people are to BE the People of God.
3. We are not the world's people. We belong to Jesus.
4. As the world in which we live moves further away from God as recent events have made clear it is,
5. The pressure will be on for us to fit in.
6. Let's remember who we are; who's name we bear.
7. Babylon is going down. We are going up.