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The Approaching Battle

Revelation 18-19

Prayer: *Father, we again thank you for your grace, and we thank you for your goodness, we thank you for your word, we thank you for your plan. Lord, I just continue to pray as we go over again this difficult material, that you would come beside us and by the power of your Holy Spirit that you would guide us and that you would again enable us to make this of permanent value. And we pray this in Jesus' name. Amen.*

Well, if you recall last time out we were speaking about the prostitute riding on a beast and we learned that the beast was the antichrist and the prostitute represented Babylon itself.

Revelation 17:5 says: And on her forehead was written a name of mystery: "Babylon the great, mother of prostitutes and of earth's abominations." Well, we also learn that Babylon was not just an ancient city, it was more of a system. It represents the settled opposition of this world and its kingdom to God and his kingdom.

And ever since the fall in the garden of Eden, there's been this

ongoing battle between the forces of light and the forces of darkness, and Babylon captures everything there is to know about the kingdom of darkness. And what's unique about Babylon is Babylon was actually a city itself. It was a city that as a whole city rebelled against God. And after the flood had wiped out all of the planet except for eight human beings, they attempted to defy God by building a tower that would reach into the heavens itself built not just with brick and mortar but with brick and bitumen which would make it a waterproof structure so that no flood could ever again take them so they could sort of raise their fist at God and say, "Try that again." God had told them to multiply and fill the whole earth and they were determined to shake their fist at God by building a city that defied that command to go forth and populate. That's the spirit of -- quote -- *"Babylon the great, mother of prostitutes and of earth's abominations."*

The spirit of Babylon that God is speaking about here is that rebellion that first was begun by Satan in the garden and then passed on through his minions so that at times it seems like the entire world is devoted to Babylon. And everyone born into this world winds up having to make a choice. They have to choose as to which kingdom their loyalty is going to reside in. You can't be neutral about this, and the choice is strictly binary. It's one kingdom or the other; it's never both. You were either of this

world or you are of the kingdom of God.

Another way of looking at Babylon is to understand how Jesus referred to it time and time again simply as "the world." Jesus said this in *John 15*. He said: *"If the world hates you, know that it has hated me before it hated you. If you were of the world, the world would love you as its own; but because you are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, therefore the world hates you."* And then in *John 16*, Jesus said: *"I have said these things to you, that in me you may have peace. In the world you will have tribulation. But take heart; I have overcome the world."*

The world is Babylon, and the prostitute riding on the beast is called "the whore of Babylon." And we ended up last time discussing how it was that the prostitute was so successful in promoting this concept of Babylon and we said her success centered on redefining the battle between these two kingdoms of light and darkness. I said the battle has always been clearly between good and evil but that it's no longer the case.

As I've mentioned before, the battle is not between good and evil anymore, it's now between different ideas of what is good. And the prostitute's been able to successfully redefine almost all of those terms. We're in the latter stages of seeing Babylon now presented

as occupying a brand new declared high moral ground. And what has shaken so many in our culture, Christian and non-Christian alike, is how successful Babylon has become in redefining the terms of the conflict by simply redefining what is good and what is evil.

I mentioned it last time, fifty years ago abortion was universally regarded as murder, as evil, but now that scale has been flipped 180 degrees. What is now considered evil is oppressing the right of every woman to her bodily autonomy that says she has the right to take the life of her child up until the day of delivery.

Marriage was agreed on by all to be a life long commitment between a man and a woman. Well now even the definition of male and female is up for grabs, and those who insist on the Judeo-Christian view of marriage are now considered to be the ones who are oppressive and evil.

Again, we can't help but notice that anti-Semitism is the new normal because we're still in the process of trying to digest what happened on October 7th. And the response of colleges all around the country saying that raping, butchering and pillaging twelve hundred innocent Jews is unfortunate but it's not truly evil when compared to the evil of Jewish colonialism. We're seeing good and evil redefined right in front of our eyes, exactly the way Isaiah said it would when he said in *Isaiah 5: Woe to those who call evil*

good and good evil, who put darkness for light and light for darkness, who put bitter for sweet and sweet for bitter!

So with all of that in mind we're now coming upon God's ultimate victory over Babylon. And God speaks of it as already having taken place because the certainty that's unfolding even though it's not yet taken place, God is simply stating ahead of time what's going to be happening in time to Babylon. This is what he says starting with *Revelation 18:1-4*. He says: *After this I saw another angel coming down from heaven, having great authority, and the earth was made bright with his glory. And he called out with a mighty voice, "Fallen, fallen is Babylon the great! She has become a dwelling place for demons, a haunt for every unclean spirit, a haunt for every unclean bird, a haunt for every unclean and detestable beast. For all nations have drunk the wine of the passion of her sexual immorality, and the kings of the earth have committed immorality with her, and the merchants of the earth have grown rich from the power of her luxurious living."*

Now some folks see Babylon as an actual real city with absolutely defined borders that gets destroyed in an instant. Others see it as the spirit of Babylon being finally and fully crushed by the kingdom of light. It says Babylon has become a dwelling place for demons and then it speaks about these three different groups that

are greatly lamenting it. And the first group is the people themselves. Every nation who -- quote -- "drunk the wine of her passion."

It says the next group is the political leaders, this is the kings of the earth who celebrate the rebellion against God that Babylon represents. And today right now, we are seeing exposed the hatred of these leaders in academia and in politics. We're seeing the hatred that they have for the kingdom of God.

Just this week the presidents of three of our elite universities, MIT, Harvard and the University of Pennsylvania, they were called before a Senate subcommittee to respond to their indifference to the raging anti-Semitism that's been found on their campuses. And in the course of intense questioning by Congresswoman Stefanik of New York, it became obvious that they were not even willing to admit that calling for genocide against the Jewish people would violate each university's code of conduct.

And the Jewish community, they're stunned, the people they thought were fellow travelers with them, they've now clearly stated positions that are far more on the side of Israel's enemies. And I can't help but see the hatred of this world towards Israel as rooted in the fact that Jesus, our Messiah, came from that very

same people group. Jesus might as just as well be telling them what he told the disciples when he said: *"If the world hates you, know that it has hated me before it hated you."* And that hatred is not confined to the Jewish community alone, it extends to anyone and anything that challenges the advancement of Babylon.

I was just struck by the new speaker of the House, Mike Johnson, I don't know a lot about him but I know he claims to be a Bible-believing Christian. And because he appears to be a political leader who actually appears to have a deep faith in Christ and in the kingdom of light, he's being excoriated by the Babylonian press.

Writing about Johnson in *The Guardian* a month ago, reporter Margaret Sullivan said this, she said: "Questioned about comments and actions deemed by many to be homophobic, the new Republican US House speaker, Mike Johnson of Louisiana, told Fox News his worldview was: 'Go pick up a Bible.' Speaking on Thursday, Johnson said he 'genuinely love[d] all people regardless of their lifestyle choices. This is not about the people themselves. I am a Bible-believing Christian. Someone asked me today in the media, they said, "People are curious. What does Mike Johnson think about any issue under the sun?" I said, well, go pick up a Bible off your shelf and read it - that's my worldview. That's what I

believe and so I make no apologies for it." Johnson added: 'That's my personal worldview.'

Well, for statements like that, Johnson has been reviled by such folks as James Carville who described Johnson as -- quote -- "A greater threat to the United States than al Qaeda." You got to think about that. I mean, for having a biblical worldview, Johnson is being viewed as more dangerous than the group that murdered 3,000 Americans and brought down the World Trade Center. But you've got to understand, Mr. Carville's not alone. He represents the thinking of much of the political class that believes that a belief in the Bible is an existential threat to this country. Essentially they've thrown their lot with the prostitute and the beast who all regard biblical Christianity as their avowed enemy.

But we've learned even the prostitute herself has enemies. If you remember from the last time there was that ten horns that represented a ten-nation political alliance that supported the prostitute and they celebrated and promoted her until they didn't. And at some point along with the antichrist, they all turned on her. If you remember back to *Revelation 17:16*, it says: *And the ten horns that you saw, they and the beast will hate the prostitute. They will make her desolate and naked, and devour her flesh and burn her up with fire.* Well, the political class, it

turns on her because ultimately it's the beast -- that's Satan himself -- he wants all worship exclusively for himself. And the politicians are followed by the merchants who have grown rich through Babylon and all three groups, the people, the politicians and the merchants, we'll see they're all broken-hearted and they're all broken-hearted at the idea of Babylon's destruction.

And what is astounding to see though is that even now the mercy of God is still at work. He's still calling his sheep out of Babylon. Verse 4 says: *Then I heard another voice from heaven saying, "Come out of her, my people, lest you take part in her sins, lest you share in her plagues; for her sins are heaped high as heaven, and God has remembered her iniquities."*

You see, the sins and the iniquities of Babylon are piled so high they finally reached heaven itself and now we're coming upon that part where payback has begun. Verse 6 says: *"Pay her back as she herself has paid back others, and repay her double for her deeds; mix a double portion for her in the cup she mixed. As she glorified herself and lived in luxury, so give her a like measure of torment and mourning, since in her heart she says, 'I sit as a queen, I am no widow, and mourning I shall never see.'"*

Judgment is coming, says God. I mean, it's something that

everybody knows deep down inside. I mean, all of us can clearly see a worldwide culture that is losing control mentally, physically and certainly spiritually. But here's the problem. How do you come out of Babylon if Babylon is everywhere? How do you come out of Babylon when your friends, your colleagues and your neighbors, they refuse to see it as Babylon even when everything seems to be coming apart? How do you come out of Babylon when the church itself seems to be quite content with it? See, God says he's going to be pleading with people to come out of Babylon and as we've seen with Lot and Sodom and Gomorrah, that's no easy task.

If you remember the angels, they told Lot he repeatedly judgment was imminent. They told him he had to leave. *Genesis 19* says: *But he lingered. So the men -- that's the angels -- so the men seized him and his wife and his two daughters by the hand, the LORD being merciful to him, and they brought him out and set him outside the city.* I mean Lot left Sodom because he was grabbed by the angels. He lingered because he couldn't believe how wicked his surroundings had become and how imminent the judgment of God was to be. That's the way it's going to be for us.

I mean, the descent into profound wickedness has been so low and so steady, so incremental over the years that we're going to be astounded how wicked our surroundings have become; and like Lot,

we'll be hoping and praying that somehow or other things can be righted or turned around or fixed before it's too late, when in reality it will be too late. Verse 8 says: *"For this reason her plagues will come in a single day, death and mourning and famine, and she will be burned up with fire; for mighty is the Lord God who has judged her."*

And once again we see there's these three different groups, they're going to be astounded at this judgment. There's the people, that's the nations themselves; there's the politicians, that's the kings and the rulers over them; and finally the merchants, that's those who created the system of Babylon and aligned it with the kingdom of the enemy. The folks who witnessed the collapse of Babylon, they're not happy, they're mourning, they're lamenting personally because it's all they know. Verse 9 says: *And the kings of the earth, who committed sexual immorality and lived in luxury with her, will weep and wail over her when they see the smoke of her burning. They will stand far off, in fear of her torment, and say, "Alas! Alas! You great city, you mighty city, Babylon! For in a single hour your judgment has come."*

Some people have been postulating for years, is this nuclear war, is this the specific judgment of God? We don't know. What we do know is that judgment is going to be virtually instantaneous.

Verse 11 says: *And the merchants of the earth weep and mourn for her, since no one buys their cargo anymore, cargo of gold, silver, jewels, pearls, fine linen, purple cloth, silk, scarlet cloth, all kinds of scented wood, all kinds of articles of ivory, all kinds of articles of costly wood, bronze, iron and marble, cinnamon, spice, incense, myrrh, frankincense, wine, oil, fine flour, wheat, cattle and sheep, horses and chariots, and slaves, that is, human souls.*

And all of those things that defined wealth and luxury, they're going up in smoke. And the merchants are weeping because they're out of business, the politicians are weeping at seeing their wealth and power instantly destroyed. And so the angel continues, he says: *"The fruit for which your soul longed has gone from you, and all your delicacies and your splendors are lost to you, never to be found again!"* The merchants of these wares, who gained wealth from her, will stand far off, in fear of her torment, weeping and mourning aloud, *"Alas, alas, for the great city that was clothed in fine linen, in purple and scarlet, adorned with gold, with jewels, and with pearls! For in a single hour all this wealth has been laid waste."* And all shipmasters and seafaring men, sailors and all whose trade is on the sea, stood far off and cried out as they saw the smoke of her burning, *"What city was like the great city?"*

One possibility that this is some type of thermonuclear destruction

is based on the fact that three different times in that paragraph God says, the kings, the merchants, and the sailors, they're all forced to watch but they're watching from a distance the destruction of the city. In verse 10 it says: *(The kings of the earth) They will stand far off, in fear of her torment.* In verse 15 it says: *The merchants of these wares, who gained wealth from her, will stand far off, in fear of her torment.* And in verse 17 it says: *And all shipmasters and seafaring men, sailors and all whose trade is on the sea, stood far off and cried out as they saw the smoke of her burning.*

And again the fact that each of these groups are watching a particular event they're watching in a particular location. And that leads John MacArthur to conclude that Babylon is not just a system, it's a real actual city. This is what he says. He says: "All will be careful to keep their distance from the stricken city. They will be powerless to help and will fear that they may share her torment. This fearful scene supports the idea that Babylon is an actual city, not a symbol for the entire world system.

Obviously, the entire world is not destroyed at this point, since those watching Babylon burn are safe for the moment. Babylon's destruction is, however, a precursor to the doom that will soon fall on the entire world." (MacArthur, John. Revelation 12-22 MacArthur New Testament Commentary (MacArthur New Testament

Commentary Series Book 33) (p. 187). Moody Publishers. Kindle Edition.)

I think it's a fair question to ask at this point how you and I would react as we saw these events unfold. And again, the answer's not that simple, I mean, we've been called to steward God's creation and no good steward wants to see that what he's labored to protect go up in smoke.

And so the question really centers around which kingdom are we most heavily invested in? See, those who have given their loyalty to the kingdom of God know that he fully intends to re-create the earth after wiping it out. And the apostle Peter raises that very question when he says in *2 Peter 3*: *But the day of the Lord will come like a thief, and then the heavens will pass away with a roar, and the heavenly bodies will be burned up and dissolved, and the earth and the works that are done on it will be exposed. Since all these things are thus to be dissolved, what sort of people ought you to be in lives of holiness and godliness, waiting for and hastening the coming of the day of God, because of which the heavens will be set on fire and dissolved, and the heavenly bodies will melt as they burn! But according to his promise we are waiting for new heavens and a new earth in which righteousness dwells.*

And so we can ask the question, are you and I waiting for and hastening the coming of the day of God? Are we living lives that have grown weary at the sights and sounds of Babylon all around us? Can we look at the destruction of everything represented and rejoice that the justice of God is at least being delivered, that the kingdom of light is no longer locked in battle with the kingdom of darkness but is prevailing now and forever? Well, if you are that's not the way the people, the kings and the merchants are viewing this. They're viewing this overwhelming destruction. Verse 19 says: *And they threw dust on their heads as they wept and mourned, crying out, "Alas, alas, for the great city where all who had ships at sea grew rich by her wealth! For in a single hour she has been laid waste."*

So we have to ask ourselves, what kingdom am I really a part of, I mean, what kingdom will I lament? I mean if I represent the kingdom of light, I've been lamenting the ever encroaching darkness that's been threatening to overwhelm the light and this destruction of Babylon should mean nothing but joy. That's what we find in verse 20. It says: *"Rejoice over her, O heaven, and you saints and apostles and prophets, for God has given judgment for you against her!"*

So God's mighty angel is telling Babylon once and for all you're

done, you're finished, all of her ways and all of her commerce and all of her attempts to craft a new normal out of what is clearly evil, they're coming to a very quick end. In verse 27 it says:

Then a mighty angel took up a stone like a great millstone and threw it into the sea, saying, "So will Babylon the great city be thrown down with violence, and will be found no more; and the sound of harpists and musicians, of flute players and trumpeters, will be heard in you no more, and a craftsman of any craft will be found in you no more, and the sound of the mill will be heard in you no more, and the light of a lamp will shine in you no more, and the voice of bridegroom and bride will be heard in you no more, for your merchants were the great ones of the earth, and all nations were deceived by your sorcery. And in her was found the blood of prophets and of saints, and of all who have been slain on earth."

So what the angel is telling Babylon is there's going to be no culture, and the sound of harpists and musicians, of flute players and trumpeters will be heard in you no more; no skilled workmen, a craftsman of any craft will be found in you no more; no construction, the sound of the mill will be heard in you no more; no light itself, the light of a lamp will shine in you no more; and finally no weddings at all, and the voice of bridegroom and bride will be heard in you no more.

So why is there no normal any more? Well it says, because the torture and killing of the saints of God was so normal in this Godforsaken Babylon that nobody even took notice -- quote -- *"because in you was found the blood of the prophets and Saints."* You see, all of chapter 18 is telling us how wicked and deserving of punishment Babylon was and is, and having finally met its true and just end we find chapter 19 opening with nothing less than a celebration. *Revelation 19:1 says: After this I heard what seemed to be the loud voice of a great multitude in heaven, crying out, "Hallelujah! Salvation and glory and power belong to our God, for his judgments are true and just; for he has judged the great prostitute who corrupted the earth with her immorality, and has avenged on her the blood of his servants."*

See, I don't think we can even begin to grasp the height, the breadth, the depth of the crimes that this prostitute has committed against God's creation. This is not some recent corruption that's being judged here, this is corruption that started in the Garden of Eden and it's continued unabated in that battle between the kingdoms until this final time of the enemy's defeat. And every miserable thing that's ever been introduced to cause mankind to rebel against God has come from this great prostitute who has corrupted the earth.

But again as we've seen, that's not all she's guilty of. If you remember from the last time she has far more to answer to than simply corrupting the earth. Back in *Revelation 17:6*, John says: *And I saw the woman, drunk with the blood of the saints, the blood of the martyrs of Jesus. When I saw her, I marveled greatly.*

This is the one who became drunk on the blood of the martyrs. She's the one that was addicted to the torture and murder of all the martyrs from Stephen in the book of Acts through all of those we read about even today in the *Voice of the Martyrs*. It goes on to say in verse 3: *Once more they cried out, "Hallelujah! The smoke from her goes up forever and ever." And the twenty-four elders and the four living creatures fell down and worshiped God who was seated on the throne, saying, "Amen. Hallelujah!" And from the throne came a voice saying, "Praise our God, all you his servants, you who fear him, small and great."*

And so this again, this raises the question it has to raise as you're reading all of this stuff, is it wrong to cry hallelujah at the absolute destruction of everything we've known as planet earth? I mean is it wrong to celebrate the smoke of its destruction going up forever and ever? I mean, isn't that what Hamas and al Qaeda does? I mean, isn't it reasonable to ask just what are we celebrating here?

Well, Hamas and Al Qaeda celebrate rape, murder and kidnapping because they hate their Jewish enemies. But you have to understand that organizations like them, they represent the goal of the beast and the prostitute, that is anything that represents outright rebellion against the kingdom of God and that certainly includes false religious like Islam. What's being celebrated here is God's victory over all of that. Verse 6 says: *Then I heard what seemed to be the voice of a great multitude, like the roar of many waters and like the sound of mighty peals of thunder, crying out, "Hallelujah! For the Lord our God the Almighty reigns."*

And what we're hearing is the heavenly host reveling in the fact that at the very last the kingdom of light has finally won. In verse 7, it says: *"Let us rejoice and exult and give him the glory, for the marriage of the Lamb has come, and his Bride has made herself ready; it was granted her to clothe herself with fine linen, bright and pure"— for the fine linen is the righteous deeds of the saints. And the angel said to me, "Write this: Blessed are those who are invited to the marriage supper of the Lamb." And he said to me, "These are the true words of God."*

So now at long last the bride of Christ which is the church, which is us, is now ready to meet her husband which is the Lord Jesus Christ. And actually what we see here is there's two different

parties that are represented here: There's the bride herself which is the church, but there's also the invited guests, which is all believers. That's all believers from the Old Testament until the birth of the church at Pentecost. You see, there's two distinct groups here, both of which are being honored. The Old Testament saints are the esteemed guests and the church is the bride herself.

Now that scripture which is often spoken incidentally at wedding ceremonies, now it meets its appointed end. If you remember this, I'm sure you've heard it at wedding ceremonies: *Husbands, love your wives, as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her, that he might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word, so that he might present the church to himself in splendor, without spot or wrinkle or any such thing, that she might be holy and without blemish.* It's his blood shed on the cross that's done just that. It has redeemed and made worthy this bride.

And the amazing thing is that offer still stands today. I mean, God himself became a human being and he lived among us and he lived among us perfectly. And then he went to the cross and he offered up that perfect life as a substitute for your life and my life of sin so that we simply by faith can claim his righteousness as ours and stand before a holy God worthy of heaven. That's what's ours

just for the asking.

And then we get to verse 10 and things take a very sudden turn. This is John speaking, remember. He says: *Then I fell down -- he's speaking to the angel -- I fell down at his feet to worship him, but he said to me, "You must not do that! I am a fellow servant with you and your brothers who hold to the testimony of Jesus. Worship God." For the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy.*

I mean, John's either completely mistaken or he's just so caught up in worship but he receives a direct and specific rebuke from the angel. He just says, *"You must not do that."* And just thinking now, this is the apostle John, this is the guy who wrote the gospel of John, he's standing in heaven itself. He's in the banquet hall of the great feast. If he can make a mistake like that, then what makes us think that while we're here on earth we can't easily fall prey to the prostitute and the beast who spends countless hours trying to get us to worship anything but God alone.

See, this feast takes place in heaven and then the King of kings and the Lord of lords mounts a white horse and he begins the final judgment of the dragon and the beast. We pick up at verse 11. It says: *Then I saw heaven opened, and behold, a white horse! The*

one sitting on it is called Faithful and True, and in righteousness he judges and makes war. His eyes are like a flame of fire, and on his head are many diadems, and he has a name written that no one knows but himself. He is clothed in a robe dipped in blood, and the name by which he is called is The Word of God.

Well commentators, they're all divided on this particular -- they don't know if this is the blood of Christ himself that was shed on the cross or it's the blood of those that he's come to vanquish. At this point it's just not clear. But what is clear is that Jesus alone has come to wreak havoc on Babylon. And what is accompanying him is all of heaven, those who've recently died in the tribulation and those saints who have been there from the start, they're all accompanying Jesus but it's Jesus alone who's waging the war.

Verse 14 says: *And the armies of heaven, arrayed in fine linen, white and pure, were following him on white horses. From his mouth comes a sharp sword with which to strike down the nations, and he will rule them with a rod of iron. He will tread the winepress of the fury of the wrath of God the Almighty. On his robe and on his thigh he has a name written, King of kings and Lord of lords.*

You know a few weeks back, maybe a month and a half or so back I was talking with Peter Keay, and he was talking about the theory of relativity. I'm sure you've all heard that $E=MC$ squared,

everybody's seen that in high school physics, it basically equates energy and matter and they're both on opposite sides of an equation. Energy can become matter and matter can become energy. Everybody who's seen atomic bomb knows that's exactly what happens.

But what Pete was asking about though is how much energy can be contained in one person who has the power to create matter itself simply by his own energy? And how much power must that person have to create not just some matter but for virtually all matter in existence simply by the power of his word alone. That's precisely how Jesus Christ created the entire universe. *John 1:1* says: *In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things were made through him, and without him was not any thing made that was made. Psalm 33:6* says: *By the word of the LORD the heavens were made, and by the breath of his mouth all their host.*

What I want you to understand is that the very same king of kings and Lord of lords that is now actively attacking Babylon is the very same one who spoke the universe into being by the sheer energy of his power. We haven't even begun to examine the power that's required for Jesus to enable himself to empty himself and walk this planet like a fellow human being when at any given moment he has

the waking walking power of ten thousand suns exploding. That power is now exploding on Babylon.

Verse 17 says: *Then I saw an angel standing in the sun, and with a loud voice he called to all the birds that fly directly overhead, "Come, gather for the great supper of God, to eat the flesh of kings, the flesh of captains, the flesh of mighty men, the flesh of horses and their riders, and the flesh of all men, both free and slave, both small and great." And I saw the beast and the kings of the earth with their armies gathered to make war against him who was sitting on the horse and against his army.*

Now what you might notice in this, you'll notice there's no give and take or ebb and flow of a battle that's taking place here. The angel notes that all of earth, all of Babylon is arrayed ready for battle. The very next statement describes that it wasn't a battle at all; it was a rout. See, the King had not come to trifle with mere earthlings. He had come to at last deal with the beast, who is Satan, and the false prophet, who is the antichrist. He had come to bring justice to all those of the kingdom of light who at so long have been denied it.

Verse 20 says: *And the beast was captured, and with it the false prophet who in its presence had done the signs by which he deceived*

those who had received the mark of the beast and those who worshiped its image. These two were thrown alive into the lake of fire that burns with sulfur. And the rest were slain by the sword that came from the mouth of him who was sitting on the horse, and all the birds were gorged with their flesh.

Now the armies that accompanied Jesus, they appear to have no role in this, they're just witnesses. And the beast and the prophet are thrown alive into the lake of fire and the rest, that is all that remains of Babylon -- quote -- *"were slain by the sword that came from the mouth of him who was sitting on the horse."* This is not the Jesus that we're familiar with. The Lamb of God has become the Lion of the tribe of Judah. And all the birds were gorged on their flesh. Such will be the fate of Babylon.

But understand something, the more you believe this, the more you act on that belief, the more Babylon's going to treat you like a threat. Basically you'll be mocked at and laughed at. To understand, Noah and his ark had to be the biggest joke in the known world up to the moment that it started to rain. Folks, this time they're not even going to have that opportunity. *Revelation 18:8* says: *"For this reason her plagues will come in a single day, death and mourning and famine, and she will be burned up with fire; for mighty is the Lord God who has judged her."*

So let me just re ask the question that I raised before but I never answered. I said, how do you come out of Babylon if Babylon is everywhere? How do you come out of Babylon when your friends and your colleagues and your neighbors refuse to see it as Babylon even when everything seems to be falling apart? How do you come out of Babylon when the church seems pretty content with it?

Well, may I suggest that we get out of Babylon the same way that this world got into it and that is incrementally. There's 168 hours in a week. We need about 56 of those for sleep, 40 or so for work, another 24 for eating, that leaves about 48 hours or maybe 6 plus hours a day. And of those 48 hours, God and his kingdom gets a little more than two on Sunday mornings, sometimes he gets considerably less than that. I suspect that Babylon gets the lion's share of the rest. And the only way that we can avoid acting like Lot in Sodom is to focus our minds on the kingdom more and more as that line and that battle approaches. It may not be for ten thousand, it may not be for a million years -- it could be this afternoon.

How do you come out of Babylon when Babylon is everywhere? Well, you start incrementally. And you do that by increasing the amount of time you spend in God's word. For many of us it would be as simple as turning on Christian radio or altering even slightly your

reading habits. For others it's as simple as joining a Bible study or starting a small group. You see, Babylon has a way of convincing us that it is real and God's kingdom is not, and that vast world that is right outside that door that has no access to these resources, it has no clue whatsoever that Babylon even exists. And the good news is that there is still time. The good news is that God is still shouting: *"Come out of her, my people, lest you take part in her sins, lest you share in her plagues."*

Here's the hard part. You and I are the instruments that he is shouting through, and this world and all those that we love in it has no chance whatsoever if we remain silent and absorbed by its culture. I want to conclude by just reading to you what Jesus said about this very day. This is what he said in *Matthew 24*. He said: *"But concerning that day and hour no one knows, not even the angels of heaven, nor the Son, but the Father only. For as were the days of Noah, so will be the coming of the Son of Man. For as in those days before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day when Noah entered the ark, and they were unaware until the flood came and swept them all away, so will be the coming of the Son of Man. Then two men will be in the field; one will be taken and one left. Two women will be grinding at the mill; one will be taken and one left. Therefore, stay awake, for you do not know on what day your Lord is coming."* Let's

pray.

Father, I thank you for how sobering your word is. It is so easy to turn on the television and say, "Oh, that's normal, that's just the way things are," and shrug our shoulders and say, "Wow, the world is sure getting wicked." We see it day in, day out. And I just pray, Lord, that the sight of that encroaching judgment would move us, would move us to plead and beg you for opportunities to share the gospel with our friends, our neighbors, our colleagues, those who have no clue what is coming. I pray for that sense of urgency and I pray for that opportunity, and I pray it in Jesus name. Amen.