

Beware of The Great Prostitute

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[0:00] Just recently, a friend of mine was getting into his car a few blocks from here. This is just a little while ago. And a woman either got in the car with him or came up right to his window, and she propositioned him.

She said, essentially, I'll perform this act if you'll just give me a ride over this place in the city. And so she was prostituting herself for a car ride.

Now, maybe you're in the room and you're saying, man, I hope that never happens to me. Or you're sitting here thinking, I wonder what my husband would do if he was propositioned like that.

Maybe you're the husband thinking, what would I do if I was propositioned like that? Well, this morning what you need to understand is that it's not if you get propositioned, it's you are getting propositioned.

This morning, God's word shows us that there is another prostitute, the great prostitute, the world, who is regularly propositioning us with various kinds of seductions.

[1:09] And they run along the lines of pleasure and prosperity, and they're designed to win our hearts away from our first love. There are all sorts of seductions with which the great prostitute seeks to seduce us.

There are the sexual seductions, and then there's the entertainment seductions. There's the financial seductions, knowledge seductions, success seductions. There is power seductions and comfort seductions.

It's all about seduction. Capturing the desires of your heart and leading you astray. The world is seeking to seduce your heart away from your great first love, the Lord Jesus Christ.

And you must resist her. Don't marvel at her. Rather, there's something more glorious to marvel at. Let me get your bearings in place if you're new here. We're in the book of Revelation. We've been preaching through the book of Revelation for some time now.

[2:17] And just two weeks ago, we were in Revelation chapter 16. And chapter 16 shows us the seven bold judgments of God. They're the full and final judgments of God on earth.

And it's the seventh bold judgment, verse 19, that we read that the great city Babylon was utterly destroyed. So here's what's going on.

What's referenced, and we're given a sneak peek of in verse 19, chapter 17 and 18 of Revelation, it opens up for us to see with greater clarity.

To see the fall of Babylon. So chapter 17, what we're going to look at this morning is, there's this angelic show and tell going on. An angel shows John this prostitute and then explains to him the details surrounding her.

And then in chapter 18, what we see is a description of her total destruction with various responses from various people. Like I said this morning, we're in chapter 17.

[3:23] And you can break it up simply as verses 1 through 6, the angel shows John this prostitute. And then verses 7 through 18, he explains to John who this prostitute is.

And so, getting, kind of taking my cues from this show and tell, here's how we're going to proceed this morning. I want to ask five questions of this woman. And as we answer those five questions of this woman in chapter 17, I want to show and tell the answer.

Just from the scriptures. From Revelation 17. So let's just dive right in with the first question. Who is this prostitute? Here's why you need to know this. You're not to marvel at her.

You're to marvel at something else. So who is this woman that we see in chapter 17? Well, verse 1, we read, One of the seven angels who had the seven bowls came and said to me, this is one of the angels who just poured out one of bowl judgments.

He says to John, Come and I will show you the judgment of the great prostitute who's seated on many waters. The great prostitute. The ultimate prostitute.

[4:36] Prostitution is an abomination in God's sight. And here's why. Prostitution is this distorted twisting of God's good gift of marriage between one man and one woman for life.

It's this twisted distortion that runs roughshod over the exclusive relationship between one man and one woman for sexuality to be expressed.

So prostitution is this awful distortion of this good thing called marriage. And in the Bible, this infidelity gets used as a metaphor.

We see it in like Ezekiel 16, in the book of Hosea. Prostitution is a metaphor for God's people being unfaithful to God.

And it's always connected to idolatry. People rejecting the one true great covenant making God and going after other false gods who cannot deliver.

[5:49] And so prostitution throughout your Bible is used to talk about spiritual adultery or idolatry. Who is this woman?

She's the great prostitute. She is a spiritual whore leading the nations away from the exclusive worship of the one true God.

That's who this is. And if you notice, and I think it's verse 5, she's going by another name. On her forehead is written, Babylon the Great.

This woman that we're seeing here is the great city that is dominating over the kings of the earth. Just let your eyes fall in verse 18.

And the woman, the angel tells us, that you saw is the great city that is dominating over the earth. Now flip, just look back to verse 19 in chapter 16.

[6:52] The great city was split into three parts and the cities of the nations fell. And God remembered Babylon the Great to make her drain the cup of the wine of the fury of his wrath. What you need to know about Babylon is if you're familiar with the book of Daniel, Nebuchadnezzar was in Babylon.

Babylon is a city that's opposed to God and oppresses God's people. But Babylon gets its namesake from another city. Babel.

Genesis chapter 11. Remember the story of Babel? Humankind organized in rebellion against God, builds a tower in their pride to make them equal with God.

Remember that? So for this lady to be labeled a prostitute in Babylon is no compliment. We're told in 1718 that this woman, this prostitute, is this great city, Babylon.

A people organized in spiritual rebellion against God. And it transcends history. This prostitute has showed up as Babel.

[8:03] Babylon, Nineveh, Tyre, Sidon, Sodom, Gomorrah, Jerusalem, Rome, Washington, D.C., New York, L.A., Hollywood, Sunset Strip, Huey Lewis and the News.

It's all a way of describing humanity in organized rebellion against God. Same horror. Different cities.

And the one great city represents, this Babylon represents opposition to God. And so the prostitute Babylon has her own community.

She has her own desires, values, goals, and methods. And the hallmark of Babylon the prostitute is the relentless pursuit of pleasure and prosperity.

Apart from God. She is a seductress. So, so far what we've learned is that this great, this woman is the great prostitute Babylon.

[9:04] And for those of us who may be familiar with other passages in our Bibles, it's another way of describing the world.

Not the created world. Not the planet. But what John talks about in John 17 and 1 John 2 and 1 John 5. As the world.

As humanity in organized rebellion against God. For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only son. That whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.

That world. Not the planet. Humanity and their sin. With all the institutions and systems. This woman is a prostitute Babylon.

The world organized against God. And there's just one more thing I want you to notice. And it's verse 6. She's drunk. A drunken prostitute.

[10:05] And she's drunk on the blood of the saints and on the martyrs of Jesus. Which means she is no ally. She is an enemy of the lamb and of his bride.

Who is this woman? The great prostitute Babylon. The world. Don't marvel at her. Next question I want to ask is.

Well who are. If she's a prostitute. Who are her Johns? Who are her clientele? Well. And we're told. We're shown in verse 2. With whom the kings of the earth commit sexual immorality.

And with the wine of whose sexual immorality the dwellers on the earth have become drunk. We're shown. The kings of the earth. Those in positions of power who don't fear God. They go after her.

They commit adultery with her. Idolatry with her. And not just those in power. It's everybody else.

The dwellers of the earth. I've been telling you all along. That the dwellers of the earth is a phrase.

[11:11] A technical phrase. For all who have rejected the lamb. They're drunk on the wine of her sexual immorality.

They're out of their minds. Maybe you heard of beer goggling before. They're babble goggling. They don't see things clearly. They've been unduly influenced by her immorality.

Her idolatry. We're told in verse 8. That these dwellers of the earth. That their names are not written in the book of life.

For the foundation of the world. These dwellers of the earth have not experienced the life changing saving grace. Of the lamb. They're opposed to him.

And so what her clientele is. Are all those who have not been appointed for eternal life. Citizens of Babylon. Clients of the prostitute.

[12:15] And in verse 1. We read this. Come I will show you the judgment of the great prostitute. Who seated on many waters. Do you see that? Seated on many waters.

Look down at verse 15. We're told what that is. And the angel said to me. The waters that you saw. Where the prostitute. Where the prostitute is seated. Are peoples and multitudes and nations and languages.

This prostitute Babylon. Representing the world. Is sitting over all the peoples of the world. Who are not followers of Jesus. To do her bidding.

To seduce them away from the lamb. To capture their hearts. By sheer force. And allure of desires. If you flip back in the book of Revelation.

To chapter 2. Verse 20. The risen. Radiant and reigning Christ. Is sent letters to these seven churches. And he sends one to the church in Theotira.

[13:19] And in verse 20. We read this. But I have this against you church. That you tolerate that woman Jezebel. Who calls herself a prophetess. And is teaching and seducing my servants.

To practice sexual immorality. And eat food sacrificed to idols. Remember this is all one book. Written to. Originally written to these seven churches.

They had already been experienced. The seduction of this prostitute. Through this teacher named Jezebel. In their church. They were being drawn away.

They were being tempted. To marvel. At the prostitute. Like all those who have never experienced. The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ. In Theotira. It seems as though these Christians.

[14:16] Were thinking that they could. Get in the sack with a prostitute. As well as live for the Lord Jesus Christ. In our day.

There is this. Distortion of the gospel. Being proclaimed in many pulpits. It's called the prosperity gospel. It's trash. It doesn't.

Doesn't bring you to the Lord Jesus. Revealed in the scriptures. I think it's. Demonic. Don't.

Don't marvel at her. Don't marvel at the world. Don't be. Confused with her clientele. Let's ask another question.

How does this great prostitute. Work her trade. What are her ways? Well the great prostitute. Like I told you earlier. Is just another enemy of the lamb.

[15:18] I mean. There's the devil. 1217. Who's. Warring against us. And then. There is the beast. One of the. Devil. The dragons. Emissaries. Who. Uses political power.

To oppress. God's people. By threat. And then there's the false prophet. Who uses. Propaganda. To. Misinform. And misdirect people. He's the spin. Meister.

And then. There is the great prostitute. And she doesn't work in power. She doesn't work in information. She operates. In the realm of pleasures. She's a seductress.

The modus operandi. Of the prostitute. Is to seduce. People. With the false promises. Of illicit pleasure.

In prosperity. We're shown. Something about her. In verse 4. What she's wearing. She is wearing.

[16:19] Clothing. Of purple. If you flip over. To chapter 18. Verse 7. You read. From the lips. Of the prostitute. I sit as a queen.

Purple. Is the color of royalty. She thinks. She's queenly. And then. She's also. Wearing. Scarlet. In verse 4.

If your eyes. Can fall. On verse 3. We'll see this. In just a second. That this. Woman. Shown. By the angel.

Is sitting. On a scarlet. Beast. That was full. Of blasphemous. Names. She is wearing. Scarlet. The beast. That she's riding. Is scarlet. Scarlet. Scarlet. Which seems. To indicate.

That they are. Color coordinated. Because they're a team. Working together. In opposition.

[17:16] To the land. They're in cahoots. We also notice. In verse 4. That. She has gold. And jewels. And pearls.

They're. They're. They're. Snapshots. Of. Prestige. And luxury. Prosperity. Wealth. Abundance. That's her trade. That's what she operates in.

Desires of the flesh. Desires of the eye. The pride of life. First John 2. She gets people drunk. And at the most basic level of drunkenness.

Is not being in your right mind. She pours out her golden cup. Verse 4. It's full of abominations. And impurities.

Of her sexual immorality. She just keeps pouring it out. Pouring it out. Cup after cup. Drink it down. Abominations are just reprehensible actions.

[18:16] Against God. Impurities are things that are unclean. God is pure and clean. He is holy. The world.

The prostitute. Gets people drunk. On ungodly living. The relentless pursuit. Of pleasure. And prosperity. In order to lead them away from the land. And if you don't think that.

That is current. Look. In. In. The day that John wrote. If you look at. Revelation. Chapter 3. Verse 17. The church of Laodicea. Jesus rebukes them.

He says. I'm going to spit you out of my mouth. In verse 16. For you say. I am rich. I have prospered. And I need nothing. Not realizing that you are wretched. Pitiably. Poor. Blind. And naked.

They were not in their right minds. Because they are drinking. From the cup. Of the prostitute. They were trying to buy.

[19:18] Fool's gold of the world. Instead of the refined gold. Offered by Jesus. So what I am helping you to see here. Is the great prostitute.

Works in the realm of seduction. And pleasures. In verse 5. She is also a mother. A mother of other prostitutes.

And abominations. She is reproducing her trade. More and more. People. Cities. Others.

Not living for the land. Her tact. Is a pretty simple one. She likes to. Help people.

Forget the giver. Of the gifts. Focus on the gifts. So the gift of sex. It's a good thing. And it can become a God thing.

[20:14] If it's disconnected. From the giver. Of that good gift. Money. It's a good gift. From God. But when. You forget. The giver. Of that gift. It can become.

Its own God. Success. Comfort. All these. Good things. Can become. God things. If they're disconnected. From the living God. What pleasures.

Are you pursuing? What illicit. Pleasures. Are you pursuing? And at what cost? Christ. If you're willing.

To compromise. The clear commands. Of Christ. In order. To satisfy. A desire. You've been. Seduced. By the world. We're not. We're not. To be seduced. By her. We're not. To marvel.

[21:15] At her. We're to be. Wise. To her ways. Fourth question. If she's a prostitute.

Who is her pimp? A pimp. A pimp is the guy. Who. Makes a living. Off a group. Of prostitutes. The prostitutes.

Pay him a cut. Of their action. For quote unquote. Protection. But what they really get. Is. Further abuse. And exploitation. So who is the prostitute's. Pimp?

Well look who's carrying her. In verse three. We see. That she is riding. The beast. And then verse seven. We're told. That the beast.

Carries her. They're in cahoots. Now this beast. Is the same beast. Of revelation. Chapter 13.

[22:13] One. Seven heads. Ten horns. He's full of blasphemous names. That's what he does. In chapter 13. Verse six. He just blasphemes God. And the people of God. He.

He just. Makes total. Nonsense. Comments. About who God. Is in his people. The beast.

Is particularly known for. Its oppression. Of God's people. Through political violence. And threat. The beast. Is trans historical. He shows up. In a variety.

Of different governments. He. He can work with communism. He can work with socialism. He can definitely work. With democracy. He doesn't mind. He's able to use it. For his purposes. He's adaptable.

Typically. If there's a little motto. It would be. The beast saying. Hey. Don't worship Jesus. Or else. Isolation. Penalty.

[23:11] The beast. Is the prostitute's. Pimp. The beast. The beast. And. I'm not sure. If you noticed this. When Bev. Was reading. But.

But there's this moment in verse 6 where John sees the woman drunk with the blood of the saints, the blood of the martyrs. And then in the latter half of verse 6, John is saying, when I saw her, I marveled greatly.

John the apostle marveling at this whore. We're not told if it is an allure or an amazement of the power that she has over people.

I'm guessing it's a little bit of both. But what it is, is he's awestruck. There's a mystique about her.

And then in verse 7, the angel tells him, why do you marvel? I will tell you the mystery of the woman and of the beast with seven heads and ten horns that carries her.

[24:19] You see, the angel is popping the mystery bubble by helping John and us to see who's carrying the prostitute.

There's where the mystery is. In verse 6, when we read that she's drunk on the blood of the saints and of the martyrs of Jesus, it's a big hint.

The great prostitute is being used by her beastly pimp to seduce the kings of the earth and the dwellers of the earth into a drunken stupor of pleasure and prosperity and power that oppresses God's people.

That's the deal. The pimp and the prostitute, they got matching colors. They're color coordinated.

They're a team working together. He's carrying her. When you saw in verse 3, the seven heads and ten horns of the beast, that probably got your attention.

[25:29] In verse 9, we have the explanation. We have the show, and in verse 9 is the tell. The seven heads are seven mountains, we're told, the angel says.

Rome had seven mountains around it. And so it's a direct reference to Rome. It was the manifestation of the beast at that time. But it's not limited to Rome. And then as only apocalyptic language does, it's got a flexibility that those seven mountains are seven kings.

Five fallen, one who is, seventh yet to come. The seven heads are different manifestations of the beast with a full and final appearance yet to come as Antichrist.

In verses 12 through 14, we have an explanation of the ten horns. They are future kings who unite together under the beast, handing over to him their authority to make war on the lamb.

It's a reference back to 1616 in Armageddon. The kings of the earth, drunk on the immorality of the prostitute, unite together to battle against the lamb.

[26:45] You cannot be in your right mind to line up against the risen Christ. This beast is a counterfeit.

Verse 8, he's described as who was, is not, and is about. It's a mockery of the God who was and is and is to come. He's a counterfeit.

See through it. She's riding a sham. He's a pimp. Bent on destruction. Speaking of which, in verse 14, we got a primer of what's going to happen in chapter 19, 11 verse 21.

When the lamb returns on a white horse and he conquers all those who oppose him with a sword from his mouth. And there is a name written on the robe in verse, chapter 19.

King of kings and Lord of lords. It's a beautiful tie-in for what we're reading here. And they will make war on the lamb. How futile. And the lamb will conquer them.

[27:54] Is that, is that tough to hold all that together? The lamb will conquer them. For he is Lord of lords and King of kings and those with him are called and chosen and faithful.

That's us. The lamb will conquer. The lamb will conquer. They will line up against him and he will conquer them.

The mystery of the world is that she does the bidding of the beast who is doing the bidding of the dragon. And we know that the lamb is going to conquer them all.

I am reading often out of the ESV study Bible. It is the Bible that I do my devotions out of.

And I often reference it in terms of the sermons I preach. And there's a note that is a very helpful note that describes the relationship between the beast and the prostitute.

[28:56] Pleasure-addicted society. Pleasure-addicted society conspires with the power-addicted state to silence the testimony of Jesus.

Belcribulous■ she's riding a pimp who's bent on destruction.

Don't be drawn off by her mystique. Our Lord exposes it for us. The final question I want to ask is, what is this prostitute's fate?

In verse 1, we're told, come, I will show you the judgment of the great prostitute who's seated on many waters. And then we are shown that, verse 16, in 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. Do you see what's going on? The beast turns on his whore.

[30:26] And the ten kings, future kings, rally with him to utterly destroy her. What a judgment.

What a judgment. It's a destruction of desolation. It's a destruction, a judgment of exposure, nakedness.

They devour her, so violent, and then they burn her up. Desecrate her. And if that's not surprising, verse 18 is surprising.

Excuse me, 17. For God has put it into their hearts, the beast and the ten kings. God has put it into their hearts to carry out his purpose by being of one mind and handing over the royal power to the beast until the words of God are fulfilled.

God's sovereignty is so amazing that he is able to use his evil enemies to accomplish his good and just purposes.

[31:44] All throughout this passage, there are multiple references to God's sovereignty. I counted up, in addition to this one, just five. The fate of this woman is set because God is sovereign and just and he will repay his wickedness and do it in the most graphic of ways.

Her fate is destruction. Revelation 17 is this angelic show and tell of the great prostitute. We see her nature.

She's a prostitute. She's Babylon. She's humanity organized against God, the world. We see her people, those not written in the book of life. We see her ways.

She is a seductress using pleasure and the pursuit of prosperity in order to distract people. Her pimp is the beast who's kind of violent and bent on destruction and her fate is one of desolation, humiliation, being devoured and being desecrated.

Don't marvel at her. That's the point of this passage. Don't marvel at the beast, at the prophet, the prostitute.

[33:09] Don't marvel at any of them. Don't marvel at the beast. Don't marvel at it. The prostitute is passing away, 1 John 2, 17. Now the question becomes, how?

You're going to leave this building and you're going to be tempted by the world. You know you will. How are you not going to give in?

Well, it's there in the text. The angel corrects John. Why do you marvel?

Don't marvel at her. And that opens up the door for me to help you to marvel at something else. Do you know how you resist the world?

With a greater marveling. Can I show you? So for the balance of this time, let me point to five things for you to marvel at.

[34:28] Don't marvel at the prostitute. Babylon. Marvel at a better city. The new Jerusalem.

In 17.1, the angel, one of the seven who poured out the bowls, comes to John and says, come, I will show you the great prostitute. In 21.9, one of the seven angels with the bowls of wrath, they come to John again and they say, come, I will show you the bride, the wife of the Lamb.

It's not Babylon. It's the new Jerusalem coming down from heaven. Marvel at that. If the prostitute is rebellious humanity organized against God, the bride, the new Jerusalem, is the blood-bought community organized in joyful submission to God.

You're a citizen of the new Jerusalem, not a citizen of Babylon. And so marvel that you have been given citizenship for the city that is to come.

Babylon had its own gold, jewels, and pearls. New Jerusalem has its own gold, jewels, and pearls.

[35:56] When was the last time you read Revelation 21 through 22.5? Be awed by that. Marvel at the better city to come.

Babylon. Way better than Babylon. Second, marvel that you are in the book.

We read earlier here that those whose names are not written in the book of life, they marvel at the prostitute, not us, because we are written in the book of life from before the foundation of the world. So we marvel at something else. Let me help you understand something here. You're not written in the book of life because of your great works that you did. You're not written in the book of life because God before the foundation of the world said, you know what, I need that guy on my team because he's so awesome.

None of that. You're written in the book of life before the foundation of the world only because God is gracious. It's his grace.

[37:07] You can say that your name is written with the blood of Jesus before the foundation of the world in that book. When was the last time you read Ephesians 2, 1 through 10?

And you brought to mind God's amazing grace with which he delivered you from death to life.

Marvel that you're not outside the book of life but your name is in the book of life if in fact you've put your trust solely in Jesus.

Third, marvel at God's ways. Marvel at his words. We read in verse 17 maybe you caught it for God has put it into their hearts to carry out his purpose by being of one mind and handing over the royal power to the beast until the words of God are fulfilled.

God's words the words of the prostitute they're empty promises. The words of our God our blood bought promises.

[38:34] Marvel at the words of this book. Let me ask you this question. Do you feel spiritually flat?

Do you know that you've compromised with the world? Could it be because you have put aside the life giving words of God?

Those sanctifying truthful words of his that give you life? If you see the Bible as page after page of restrictions that keep you from living the life you really want to and if they weren't there you'd be all after that life.

If that's how you're seeing the Bible you've got to ask the question maybe you need to get right with Jesus but if you're seeing God's words as page after page of life after life after life marvel that his promises always prove true.

True in John 17 14 through 18 Jesus is praying for his disciples and he talks about how he has called them out of the world and how he's giving them his word to sanctify them in truth so that they can be in the world but not of the world to be new Jerusalem citizens while being among Babylon you need God's word marvel at his ways when was the last time you read Psalm 119 marvel at the lamb for if the beast is the great prostitute's pimp then the lamb is the bride's husband pimps don't protect prostitutes they exploit prostitutes the beast devours the prostitute in the end but do you know what kind of husband

[40:52] Jesus is to his bride the church he does not desolate his bride he gives her life he doesn't expose her nakedness he covers her with his righteousness he doesn't devour her he gives her life up for her he doesn't burn her with fire he bore the fury of God's wrath for her he is the lord of lords and king of kings he is the husband of the bride marvel at the lamb he's no pimp he's our faithful loving bridegroom and you know what he has to say John 16 33 hey babe take heart I've overcome the world I got you you need you need big Jesus in your life

Colossians 1 15 through 23 if you haven't read it lately read it or if it's been some time since you saw the spectacular vision of Jesus at the beginning of revelation revelation 1 12 through 18 go big Jesus you will see the risen radiant and reigning Christ in his glory marvel at the lamb not at the pimp finally marvel that your future future is not her future in chapter 18 you will see next week the future desolation of the great prostitute but in revelation 19 starting in verse 6 you see the future celebration of the marriage supper of the lamb the bride of Christ reunited with his groom her groom in his presence with his people in his place singing his praises if you're in Christ your future isn't the future of the prostitute your future is the future of the bride of Christ because of

Jesus you do not need to fear but marvel that God in his sovereign grace has provided for you a glorious future with him do you know what the last four words of revelation chapter 22 verse 20 are they're about your future all this marveling guards our hearts against the prostitute seeking to entice us you tell me a man who deeply loves his wife who delights in her who respects her longs for her joy to leave her can't live without her he's going to be hard pressed to cheat on her when the world tries to seduce you if you are marveling about the city to come if you're marveling that you're in the book if you're marveling about the goodness of his ways if you're marveling about the lamb if you're marveling about your future and that prostitute comes up to you and seeks to tantalize you here's what you say sorry

I belong to another who is far better who is my first love and I will never forsake him Christ the King Church resist the world by marveling at the God who gave himself for you all that he's done all that he's doing and all that he will do God thank you so much for reminding us that not only are we being regularly tempted but you have made such wonderful gracious and glorious provisions for us God would you cause our hearts to marvel at you and all that you've done for us so that we can walk faithfully with you Lord Jesus our bridegroom amen