

**(Intro Slide)**



**We have all heard that hindsight is always 20/20. We look back and imagine that we would have seen it coming, and yet so many won't.**

**TR: One tongue in cheek definition of hindsight is . . .**

**hind·sight /'hīn(d),sīt/ =**

**woulda + shoulda + coulda**

**. . . the look back that makes us mutter . . . woulda, shoulda, coulda.**

**-- You can ask someone, as they look back, “If you knew then what you know now, what would you do differently?”**

**-- Hindsight bias: overestimating the ability to predict an outcome, but only after the outcome has already happened.**

**-- “What looks inevitable in hindsight is often invisible in foresight.”**

**-- If that’s true, how can we make the right decisions NOW, without waiting for hindsight?**

**-- God has given us the Revelation of Jesus to John to help us have the wisdom of 20/20 hindsight through foresight.**

**TR: Revelation 17-18 begins our wisdom forecast by pointing us to the . . .**



**. . . lure that you and I need to be wary of.**

**-- A fish may flop around in the boat, and say, "I knew it was a lure. I knew it had a line attached."**

**-- BUT, laying there in the boat, with gills flapping,, tells us that he really wasn't all that wise.**

**TR: Chapter 17 tells us of . . .**

**The Lure of the Prostitute (17:1-18)**

**(1-2) An invitation to see the  
prostitute's end**

**READ SLIDE**

**TR: Chapter 17:1**

Revelation 17:1-2 p. 1139

Then one of the seven angels who had the seven bowls came and said to me, **"Come, I will show you the judgment of the great prostitute** who is seated on many waters, <sup>2</sup>with whom the kings of the earth have committed sexual immorality, and with the wine of whose sexual immorality the dwellers on earth have become drunk."

ESV

## READ SLIDE

-- This woman is a picture of the kingdom of this world, called Babylon the Great.

TR: We are invited to see, that is, to have foresight to see into the future to the time of the judgment of this great prostitute.

## The Lure of the Prostitute (17:1-18)

(1-2) An invitation to see the  
prostitute's end

(3-6a) The vision of unfolds

**Verses 3-6a then help us to see the vision John is given as it unfolds.**

**-- And, although John was invited to see the judgment, we begin by seeing the alluring and destructive power of the kingdom of this world with its enticing lures.**

**TR: Beginning in verse 3**



And he carried me away in the Spirit into a wilderness, and I saw a woman sitting on a scarlet beast that was full of blasphemous names, and it had seven heads and ten horns.

ESV

**READ SLIDE**

-- We've already seen this beast with its seven heads and 10 horns.

**TR: Verse 4**

The woman was arrayed in purple and scarlet, and adorned with gold and jewels and pearls, holding in her hand a golden cup full of abominations and the impurities of her sexual immorality.

ESV

### READ SLIDE

- Purple and scarlet, colors of wealth and power.
- Purple dye was made from small crustaceans . . . lots of them!
- Again we see abominations and sexual immorality . . . most likely literal and figurative.

TR: Verse 5

And on her forehead was written a name of mystery: "Babylon the great, mother of prostitutes and of earth's abominations." <sup>6</sup>And I saw the woman, **drunk with the blood of the saints, the blood of the martyrs of Jesus.**

ESV

**READ SLIDE**

**TR: The kingdom of this world . . .**



**. . . is the mother of prostitutes and of the earth's abominations.**

**-- We are not talking about those who are kidnapped and forced into a life of prostitution, those enslaved by the horror of human trafficking . . .**

**-- . . . we ARE talking about the kind of person who doesn't care about God, covenant-faithfulness, or the final outcome of her actions.**

**TR: But, even this vision, as it unfolds, leaves us with lots of questions.**

**The Lure of the Prostitute (17:1-18)**

**(1-2) An invitation to see the  
prostitute's end**

**(3-6a) The vision of unfolds**

**(6b-18) The mystery explained**

**And this time, John has many of the images and symbols explained throughout the rest of chapter 17**

**TR: Begin in the middle of verse 6**

When I saw her, I **marveled greatly**.  
7But the angel said to me, "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.

ESV

### READ SLIDE

-- literally, "amazed with great amazement" or another translation, "awestruck with wonder."

-- [mystery] = that which was hidden but is now revealed (through foresight given us the power of hindsight)

TR: Who is this beast?

Revelation 17:8 p. 1139

The **beast** that you saw was, and is not, and is about to rise from the bottomless pit and go to destruction. And the **dwellers on earth** whose names have not been written in the book of life from the foundation of the world will marvel to see the beast, because it was and is not and is to come.

ESV

**READ SLIDE (first sentence)**

-- The who was, was not, and is points us to the same beast that received the apparently mortal wound but then either recovered or resurrected.

**READ SLIDE (from “And the dwellers on earth . . .”)**

-- [earth dwellers, who have really no foresight and only live for the now. Their minds are not set on things above but only on this world.

-- They have not been written in the book of life.

-- They marvel and even worship this demonically empowered leader.

**TR: What do these explanations of the mystery call for?**



**This calls for a mind with wisdom:**  
the **seven heads** are seven  
mountains on which the woman is  
seated; <sup>10</sup>they are **also seven kings**,  
five of whom have fallen, one is,  
the other has not yet come, and  
when he does come he must  
remain only a little while.

ESV

### READ SLIDE

- This calls for a mind of wisdom.
- [seven heads] = seven mountains, seven kings
- Some see the various Caesars from the first century but the timelines don't perfectly line up.

TR: And how does the beast fit in with these kings?

Revelation 17:11-12 p. 1140

As for the beast that was and is not, it is an eighth but it belongs to the seven, and it goes to destruction.  
<sup>12</sup>And the **ten horns** that you saw are ten kings who have not yet received royal power, but they are to receive authority as kings for one hour, together with the beast.

ESV

### READ SLIDE

-- The beast is an 8<sup>th</sup> king

-- And then we read about more kings, 10 horns, who receive authority.

TR: What do these 10 do with that authority?

Revelation 17:13-14 p. 1140

These are of one mind, and they hand over their power and authority to the beast. <sup>14</sup>They will make war on the Lamb, and 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.

ESV

**READ SLIDE (the white text)**

- the 10 kings given their power and authority to the beast,
- and with one mind they together make war on the Lamb.
- How do they make war on the Lamb . . . at first, indirectly, by attacking His followers . . .
- . . . and then directly in the final battle that we read about last week and will again next week.

-- But, this is not the END that we must be looking to, for **READ SLIDE (begin with “and the Lamb will conquer . . .”)**

**TR: Verse one said this woman, this prostitute, sits on many waters. What are they?**

Revelation 17:15-16 p. 1140

And the angel said to me, "The **waters** that you saw, where the prostitute is seated, are peoples and multitudes and nations and languages. <sup>16</sup>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,

ESV

### **READ SLIDE (Verse 15)**

- Controlling the world's populations, the woman sits on their power.
- But the 10 kings, horns of power, turn from making war on the Lamb and turn to hating the prostitute.
- Evil always turns on itself. This is talking about civil war between this coalition of powers.

**TR: It is something that God uses as part of His judgment on evil.**



**. . . for God has put it into their hearts to carry out his purpose** by being of one mind and handing over their royal power to the beast, **until the words of God are fulfilled.** <sup>18</sup>And the woman that you saw is the great city that has dominion over the kings of the earth."

ESV

### READ SLIDE

- The woman is the great city, which is Babylon the Great, the archetype of the kingdom of this world.
- This kingdom is given great power when the 10 kings are of one mind and hand over royal control to the beast.
- BUT, all of this is only until the words of God are fulfilled.
- God's purposes are carried out . . . PERIOD.

**TR: The lure of the prostitute with her fine clothing and power over the kings of the earth is a call to us.**

**THIS CALLS FOR A MIND**  
**WITH WISDOM:**

**“Remember who wins!  
See the end.”**

**READ SLIDE**

**TR: This comes from verse 9**

**This calls for a mind with wisdom:**  
the seven heads are seven  
mountains on which the woman is  
seated; <sup>10</sup>they are also seven kings,  
five of whom have fallen, one is,  
the other has not yet come, and  
when he does come he must  
remain only a little while.

ESV

**“This calls for a mind with wisdom”  
-- not primarily to figure out exactly who is what, but to  
remember the end.**

**TR: Verse 14**

Revelation 17:13-14 p. 1140

These are of one mind, and they hand over their power and authority to the beast. <sup>14</sup>They will make war on the Lamb, and 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.

ESV

**READ SLIDE (yellow text)**

-- We are called to look through all the make-up and see the woman for who see is.

-- We are called to be wise enough to listen to God's foresight and theyby remember the end.

**TR: I still hear my friend say, reflecting on Proverbs 11:22**





Like a  
gold ring in a  
pig's snout  
is a beautiful  
woman  
without  
discretion.

*Prov. 11:22*

**“Watch out for the GRIPS . . . the gold rings in pig’s snouts.  
-- The kingdom of this world may be alluringly beautiful . . . but  
we must “remember the end” and make wise choices today.  
-- Remember the end of our behavior, our giving in to sin.  
-- There is always a price to pay.  
-- As some have summarized the book of Revelation . . . “Jesus  
wins and we win with Him! Stay faithful!”**

**TR: When we remember the end, that the prostitute of this  
world’s kingdom will fall, we hear another call to our  
wandering hearts.**

**The Fall of the Prostitute (18:1-8)**

**(1-3) The announcement of the  
prostitute's end**

**Here we begin chapter 18, with READ SLIDE**

**TR: Verse 1**

After this I saw another angel coming down from heaven, having great authority, and the earth was made bright with his glory. <sup>2</sup>And he called out with a mighty voice,

*ESV*

**READ SLIDE**

**TR: Verse 2 continues . . .**

**“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.”

ESV

**READ SLIDE**

-- Like the images found in OT prophecies . . . the fall is so complete that people don't even live there anymore.

**TR: Why does God have this angel declare that the prostitute has fallen? What lies behind her judgment?**

**“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.”**

ESV

**READ SLIDE**

- What does the world offer to us . . . passion of sexual immorality . . .
- . . . and the power of luxurious living.

**TR: Is it really that bad to give in to the world’s sexual passions? Is it really that bad to want to live well, high on the hog?**

### The Fall of the Prostitute (18:1-8)

(1-3) The announcement of the prostitute's end

(6-7) The justice of her end

**Verse 6-7 tell us that God is just to bring this arrogant prostitute down.**

**-- Pride goes before the fall, as Proverbs warns us.**

**TR: Verse 6**

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; <sup>5</sup>for her sins are heaped high as heaven, and God has remembered her iniquities.”

ESV

**READ SLIDE**

- No one gets away with anything.
- All sins will be paid for by Jesus or by those who are the earth dwellers and demons.

**TR: This voice from heaven continues . . .**



**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. <sup>7</sup>As she glorified herself and lived in luxury, **so give her a like measure** of torment and mourning,

ESV

### READ SLIDE

- [pay back double] – not injustice but rather “pay her back fully” is probably the idea.
- The prostitute is proud, glorifying herself.
- The woman of this world lived in luxury.
- But all this wantonness will come to an end.

TR: And the end will be . . .



### The Fall of the Prostitute (18:1-8)

(1-3) The announcement of the prostitute's end

(6-7) The justice of her end

(8) The swiftness of her end

. . . swift.

TR: The end of verse 7 and 8 . . .

Revelation 18:7b-8 p. 1140

“. . . since in her heart she says, ‘I sit as a queen, I am no widow, and mourning I shall never see.’ 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.”

ESV

### READ SLIDE

-- The kingdom of this world, personified as this prostitute woman, in her pride says, “I am a queen.”

-- She says, “I will never face the grief of being a powerless widow. I will never have to mourn any loss.”

TR: The fall of the prostitute calls for a mind with wisdom . . . a mind that has the foresight to listen to God when He says . . .

.

**THIS CALLS FOR A MIND**  
**WITH WISDOM:**

**“Come out of her, my people!”  
Separate from evil.”**

**READ SLIDE**

**TR: Isn't that what verse 4 told us . . .**

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;** <sup>5</sup>for her sins are heaped high as heaven, and God has remembered her iniquities.”

ESV

**READ SLIDE (yellow text)**

-- some may take the idea of separation from the world to the extreme of Amish-like groups.

-- It is hard to know how to be in the world but not of the world.

-- But when we aren't even thinking of the challenge, when we assume that we are good, it is almost certain that we need to hear this call.

**TR: Verse 8 takes us back to the first insight that gives us the foresight of prophetic hindsight . . .**

Revelation 18:7b-8 p. 1140

“. . . since in her heart she says, ‘I sit as a queen, I am no widow, and mourning I shall never see.’ 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.**”

ESV

**What will be this street walker’s end? She will be judged . . .  
READ SLIDE (yellow text)**

**TR: The wise person separates themselves from the evil of this world.**



**He or she remembers that we cannot carry fire next to our chest and not get burned.**

**-- The wise one remembers the account of the simple young man in Proverbs 7 . . .**

**-- PROVERBS 7:6 For at the window of my house I have looked out through my lattice, 7 and I have seen among the simple, I have perceived among the youths, a young man lacking sense, 8 passing along the street near her corner, taking the road to her house 9 in the twilight, in the evening, at the time of night and darkness. 10 And behold, the woman meets him, dressed as a prostitute, wily of heart.**

**-- The mind with wisdom separates itself from the world's self-indulgences, pride, and presumption.**

**-- Are we allowing ourselves to become unequally yoked to the world . . . in dating relationships? in business relationships? in**

**toleration of that which is wrong?**

**TR: If we still haven't been able, with prophetic foresight, to see the prostitute's end, the rest of chapter 18 takes us to the funeral . . .**



## The Wake of the Prostitute (18:9-24)

(21-24) The “wake” of her end  
will be complete

to the wake for this world’s kingdom.

-- We’ve seen the lure, the fall, and now the wake.

TR: The poetic structure that is repeated in this section means we can get the point without belaboring it. I’m not trying to skip over Scripture, but I’m assuming that the lament over the fall of Babylon is really quite clear.



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 . . ."

ESV

### **READ SLIDE**

- When I said "wake," I wasn't just referring to what happens after someone dies and we tell stories about them.
- It is also a wake of a wave, a negative ripple effect of when a huge millstone, the kind a donkey would be needed to turn, is thrown into the sea.

**TR: Why does this death keel sound?**

**“. . . for your merchants were the great ones of the earth, and all nations were deceived by your sorcery. <sup>24</sup>And in her was found the blood of prophets and of saints, and of all who have been slain on earth.”**

ESV

**Down to the middle of verse 23 . . . READ SLIDE**

- The judgment on this world comes based on how they have treated the heaven-dwellers, the saints, those declared righteous by God through faith in Christ.**
- She has deceived the nations . . . taking away the foresight to see what will be the end. The foresight that can see with eyes that can see what will be our hindsight when that time comes.**
- When the hindsight comes at the time of Jesus' judgment of the world's kingdom and the demonic forces that energize it, we will say things like, "It was worth it to be faithful. Those light and momentary afflictions don't look very big**

**now.”**

**TR: Then, verse 9-19 tell us . . .**

## The Wake of the Prostitute (18:9-24)

(21-24) The “wake” of her end  
will be complete

(9-19) Most will mourn what they  
lose with her end

. . . what the mourners will say at this wake.

-- At the fall, the end of the kingdom of this world, Babylon the Great . . .

-- . . . those who mourn will cry out for what **THEY** have lost.

TR: There are three groups mentioned in this passage . . .

Revelation 18:9-10 p. 1140

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. <sup>10</sup>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."

ESV

**. . . first, the kings of the earth . . . READ SLIDE . . . the imagery has changed from Babylon as a woman to Babylon as a city.**

**-- The ruling class earth dwellers who had an affair with the world's kingdom, enjoying the luxury of being able to buy and sell because of the mark of the beast, now cry, "Alas!"**

**TR: A second group of mourners are the . . .**

And the **merchants** of the earth weep and mourn for her, since no one buys their cargo anymore . . .

*ESV*

. . . merchants . . . **READ SLIDE**

**TR: Verse 15 explains a bit further . . .**

The **merchants** of these wares, who gained wealth from her, will stand far off, in fear of her torment, weeping and mourning aloud . . .

ESV

**READ SLIDE**

-- These folks profited from the world's kingdom, doing worldly things.

TR: And these merchants need some way to move their goods. In the first century, especially in the Roman Empire, that was by the waters of the Mediterranean Sea.



And all **shipmasters and seafaring men**, sailors and all whose trade is on the sea, stood far off <sup>18</sup>and cried out as they saw the smoke of her burning . . .

*ESV*

## READ SLIDE

**TR: Using the symbolic gesture of covering themselves with ashes, these folks, who gained their wealth by hauling the goods of the merchants around, grieve.**

**And they threw dust on their heads  
as they wept and mourned, crying  
out . . .**

*ESV*

## **READ SLIDE**

**TR: All of this foresight, a virtual spiritual visit to a funeral yet to come, is a call for a mind with wisdom. Specifically . . .**

**THIS CALLS FOR A MIND**  
**WITH WISDOM:**

**“Rejoice for God’s judgment.  
Secure our emotions.”**

**. . . we are called to . . . READ SLIDE**

**TR: Look at verse 20 that closes this section.**

**“Rejoice over her, O heaven,  
and you saints and apostles and  
prophets,  
for God has given judgment for you  
against her!”**

*ESV*

**READ SLIDE**

**TR: The wise ones among us will make sure we don't give ourselves over to an . . .**

**THIS CALLS FOR A MIND**  
**WITH WISDOM:**

**“Rejoice for God’s judgment.  
Secure our emotions.”**

**. . . emotional affair with the world.**

**-- Very humbling is to take a look at the list of the things that the three groups are grieving that they lost . . . and realize how many of those things are in our homes right now.**

**-- We may say that we are not worldly or materialistic . . . but we may be having an emotional affair right now.**

**-- College students can be having an affair with the thought of how much they will earn in their chosen careers, rather than first listening to God’s leading.**

**-- Those near or in retirement can be emotionally bound to their nest eggs.**

**-- Some imagine that the security of a better job for themselves or their spouse would give them the peace of mind called, “security.”**

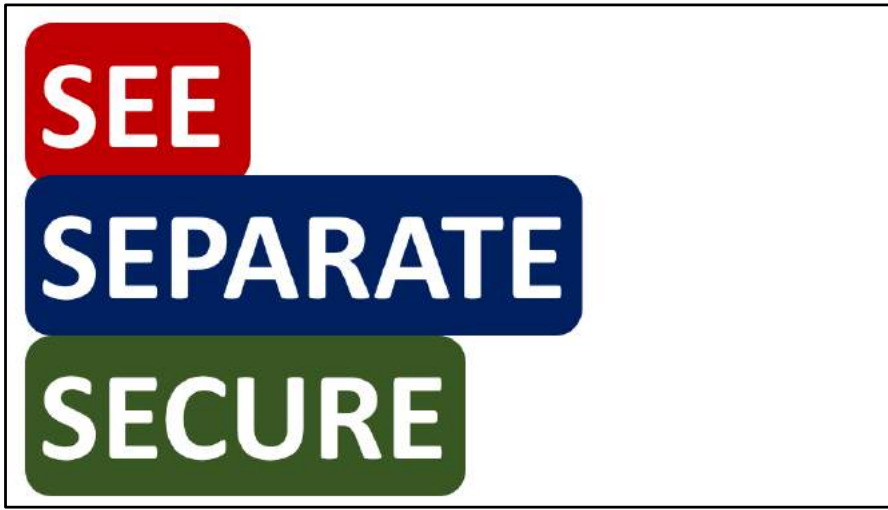
**-- What are we most worried about losing? If it is the stuff or**

**pleasures of earth dwellers, then we are not among the wise.**

**-- Do we really love our truck? Our boat? Our home? Our chance to go to Florida?**

**-- It is hard to be in a worldly culture like ours and not give a second look to the world as she flirts with us.**

**TR: This foresight of prophecy tells us of the end, when all will have hindsight. But, long before the end we are called to . . .**



**READ SLIDE**

**TR: Those who are wise will . . .**





**READ SLIDE**

- Even when this world looks like a better deal . . . see the end.
- When we are tempted to compromise and take part in the little sins of the world . . . separate from evil.
- And when the world invites us to have an affair with her and the lifestyles of the rich and famous . . . we must secure our emotions.

**Where are we wandering at twilight? What coals are we holding to our chests? Where are we violating the Billy Graham principle in our friendship with this world?**