

Pine Knoll Sabbath School Study Notes
First Quarter 2019: *The Book of Revelation*
Lesson 12 Judgment on Babylon

Read for this week's study

Revelation 17:1–18; Jeremiah 51:13; Revelation 13:1–10; Exodus 28:2:20–23; 13:5–8.

Memory Text

“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. For her sins have reached to heaven, and God has remembered her iniquities’ ” (Revelation 18:4, 5, NKJV).

Lesson Outline from Adult Sabbath School Study Guide

- I. Introduction
- II. The Prostitute Babylon
- III. The Prostitute Riding on the Beast
- IV. The Identification of the Beast
- V. The Seven Heads of the Beast
- VI. The Fall of Babylon
- VII. Further Study

Questions and Notes for Consideration

Facilitator: Jon Paulien

1. Read Revelation 16:19. End-time Babylon is portrayed as a city made up of three parts. What are those three parts and what are the implications for our understanding of final events? How is the collapse of Babylon described in chapters 17 and 18 of Revelation? (Sabbath afternoon)
2. Read Revelation 17:1 along with Jeremiah 51:13. What are the “many waters” of end-time Babylon? According to Revelation 17:15, what do those “many waters” symbolize? Read Revelation 17:2 along with 14:8 and 18:2-3. What two groups of people are involved in relationship with Babylon and what are the implications for how we relate to truth? At the end of history, the great masses of earth get it all wrong. What are the implications of this in relation to following popular sentiment at any point in history? (Sunday's lesson)
3. Compare Revelation 17:3-5 with Revelation 13:1-10. What common features do you see between the prostitute of Revelation 17 and the sea beast of Revelation 13? Compare the prostitute of Revelation 17 with the High Priest in the Old Testament (Exodus 28:17-21). What does this tell you about the end-time deception? In light of

this, how can we better follow Jesus' advice to "watch and pray" as we approach the End (Luke 21:36)? (Monday's lesson)

4. Read Revelation 17:8 and 13:8. How does Revelation 13:3 clarify the three phases of the beast's existence and activities? What impact do you think bigotry, intolerance and persecution would have on your own faith? (Tuesday's lesson)
5. Read Revelation 17:9-11 along with Revelation 13:18. The requirement for understanding the seven heads is a mind of wisdom. What kind of wisdom is in view here? How does one obtain it? How would you identify the seven heads of the beast in the course of history? (Wednesday's lesson)
6. Read Revelation 17:12-15 along with Revelation 16:12-16. What do you learn from the text about the "ten kings"? Read Revelation 17:16-18. How does this passage relate to Revelation 16:12 and what lies behind the change of attitude on the part of the secular, political powers of the world toward Babylon? What specific promise is given in Revelation 17:14 and what should this promise mean to us? (Thursday's lesson)
7. As Revelation 18:4 shows, there are many God-fearing people in Babylon whom God calls, "My people." What implications does this have for the way we relate to people who view the Christian faith very differently than we do? How can we present a critique of institutional Christianity without falling into the trap of superiority and self-promotion? (Friday's lesson)
8. Read Revelation 17:3-6. Why is John so astonished when he sees the prostitute? What relationship, if any, do you see between the woman of chapter twelve and the prostitute of chapter seventeen? What can we learn from this comparison? (Friday's lesson)
9. What role does Revelation 16:15 play in the dismal portrayal of Babylon and the end-time crisis? (Friday's lesson)

Thoughts from Graham Maxwell

Before Christ returns, the Bible describes—in fact Jesus describes—a time of confusion and deception such as the world has never seen. All of that will be leading up to Satan's final attempt to win the whole world to worship him, to trust him. He even asked Jesus to get down on his knees and worship him in the wilderness of temptation. Revelation thirteen says that when Satan's campaign is over, the whole world will be worshipping him, except those few who have not been deceived. So it should not surprise us, if we are as near the end as we believe we are, that we find ourselves surrounded on all sides by conflicting claims to religious authority. Certainly the development of modern media has made us more aware of this than ever before. As we see and listen to all these conflicting claims, how often they are supported by position, or power, or miracles, or claims of special communications from the Lord.

How Satan would enjoy it if he could turn God's friends on this planet against their heavenly Father!

Or even more seriously, how he would love to deceive God's friends even as they continue professing to be his commandment-keeping people. That would be the most destructive.

No wonder Paul said that we should grow up and not be so easily swayed to and fro by every wind of doctrine. (Ephesians 4) Again in Hebrews 5 he says we should grow up and have our faculties trained by practice to distinguish between good and evil, right and wrong. {Graham Maxwell. Excerpt from the audio series, Conversations About God, #7, "The Question of Authority" recorded February, 1984, Loma Linda, California} *To listen to the entire audio of the above reference, click on the following direct link: <http://pkp.cc/7MMCAG>*

Now, Satan cannot use this method—the method of open investigation and inquiry. He would lose if he did. He doesn't dare invite our questions, for the truth is not with him. And so he has used religion to silence inquiry. And then diabolically, he calls that willingness to believe without inquiry *faith*.

Instead of evidence and truth, he has to substitute force, and fear, and ignorance, and miracles, and excitement, and feelings, and pomp and majesty, and ceremony, and mystery, and especially claims upon claims.

All these things we must beware and be ready lest we be deceived. Let's not underestimate his cunning. He deceived one third of the brilliant angels.

Of course, if we read the sixty-six books through, we realize how often we have been warned to beware of such things. Jesus himself warns specifically of Satan's methods. Look at the first passage on the Bible Reference Sheet. The familiar words of Matthew 24:24: "If anyone says to you then, 'Look, here is Christ!', or 'There He is!', don't believe it. False Christs and false prophets are going to appear and will produce great signs and wonders to mislead, if it were possible, even God's own people!" (Phillips).

Also a little earlier in the same chapter, in Matthew 24:4, 5: "Jesus answered, 'Watch out, and do not let anyone fool you. Many men, claiming to speak for me [and how many there are today], will come and say, 'I am the Messiah!' and they will fool many people.'" (GNB)

Just to show how far that can go, I brought just one book tonight. I think it is the most unusual Bible I have in my whole collection. I almost hesitate to travel with it lest it be found in my briefcase. This is the *New Testament of our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ as Revised and Corrected by the Spirits*. It is the Spiritist's Bible. It is absolutely unbelievable. It came out in 1861. What is so remarkable about it is that it thoroughly rewrites the New Testament in support of Spiritism. Yet, in the end of the introduction, it claims that Jesus came down from

heaven, the medium that he was, and the apostles came down with him, and they corrected all the errors in the New Testament. And then it says, “Dear Reader, trust in God who made all things after the council of his own will. The Holy Spirits feel much interest in this work and the spirits who corrected this New Testament desire that the world will receive this correction as coming from them directed by God himself, which is true. Signed, Jesus the Christ.” A diabolical fraud! But look at the claim. Anybody can make claims.

And John warns of the use of miracles to deceive. Look at that passage next, in Revelation 13:13, 14:

This second beast [and you remember the symbolism of the last book in the Bible—this second power] performed great miracles; it made fire come down out of heaven to earth in the sight of everyone. And it deceived all the people living on earth by means of the miracles which it was allowed to perform. (GNB)

Speaking of that last time in human history, Paul gives the same warning in the next passage: 2 Thessalonians 2:9:

The coming of the lawless one will be in accordance with the work of Satan displayed in all kinds of counterfeit miracles, signs and wonders, and in every sort of evil that deceives those who are perishing. They perish because they refused to love the truth [which is our only protection, of course]. (NIV)

But most seriously, Paul warns of God’s professed messengers engaged in this work of deception. Look at the next passage, in 2 Corinthians 11:13:

God’s messengers [he raises a question]? They are counterfeits of the real thing, dishonest practitioners masquerading as the messengers of Christ. Nor do their tactics surprise me when I consider how Satan himself masquerades as an angel of light [he still pretends to be Lucifer, you know, the bearer of light and truth]. It is only to be expected that his angels will have the appearance of ministers of righteousness. (Phillips)

{Graham Maxwell. Excerpt from the audio series, *Conversations About God*, #7, “The Question of Authority” recorded February, 1984, Loma Linda, California} *To listen to the entire audio of the above reference, click on the following direct link:* <http://pkp.cc/7MMCAG>

Lou: As you talked about this matter of Satan’s final effort to deceive, I wondered, do you expect that we’re going to see devil worship before the end of time? Some of these blatant things that we tend to associate with other places on earth, more dark as far as knowledge and civilization and so on . . .

Graham: I don’t think so, especially among the Christian nations. These are the people he wants to deceive the most. He wants to be worshiped, not as the devil; he wants to be worshiped as

Christ. And so he masquerades as an angel of light. He will come in the end as an angel of light. And he will be worshiped (Revelation 13) as he wanted to be worshiped by the angels. He asked Jesus to get down on his knees and worship him. His great moment will be when the cry goes forth, "Christ has come! Christ has come!" and the world prostrates itself before him; except the few who will say, "No, you not only have a devil; you are the devil." And you could see why it would go hard for them.

Lou: In a way then, that ties in with what you said earlier. He really isn't anxious to be identified as Satan.

Graham: No.

Lou: He really wants to masquerade as Christ.

Graham: That's the deception. If he came with horns and a tail, that wouldn't be any problem. He comes as a gracious redeemer, the great medical missionary and heals the diseases of the people—he even appears to raise the dead. And these are the evidences so many people use to test their beliefs. He will so deceive us. Then we remember, maybe, that discussion on the question of authority. The way he uses his authority and relies on miracles will warn us. Beware! He could be lying to us as that older prophet did in 1 Kings 13. {Graham Maxwell. Excerpt from the audio series, *Conversations About God*, #17 with Lou Venden, "Satan's Final Effort to Deceive" recorded May, 1984, Loma Linda, California} *To listen to the entire audio of the above reference, click on the following direct link: <http://pkp.cc/17MMCAG>*

Lou: If the devil, though, could deceive a third of the angels—and we started out with that in our very first meeting, the war that began in Heaven. How, what chance do we have to resist by ourselves?

Graham: Well, I have to go back and think of people in the Bible who did. And there's Job. And Job even called for help and none seemed to come. And yet he survived.

Lou: Things seemed to get worse.

Graham: And things got worse, that's right. The more he called for help, the more things got worse. He says, "God, I call and you never answer me." That was on our Bible reference sheet last week. And yet Job did not let God down. This is extraordinary. Of course, God had brought him to that point. And I believe God wishes to bring us to the point where we can actually stand singly and alone, and the only restraint on the devil is, "You may not take his life." And Job survived. That's incredible! Did you notice Job bragging, though, when it was all over? Oh, he was humbled by it all, and he was hardly prepared for God to say, "You did wonderfully Job! Wonderfully! When you felt you were doing so badly, here in Heaven I would say, 'Now there's a perfect man.'" But that's not conceit. Job was not conceited.

Lou: You used the expression, “to stand singly and alone.” You don’t mean by that, standing without God. You mean standing alone as far as other evidence of the presence of others, perhaps?

Graham: Satan was given a free hand. You remember, Satan said: “Just let me get my hands on him, and he’ll curse you to your face.” And so eventually he took everything away from Job. And all Job had to help him, it appeared, were those theologians; and they were all wrong.

Lou: Miserable help.

Graham: And I might suggest that Satan’s final effort to deceive may come most persuasively through caring theologians. Now, how can we be aware?

Job was certainly protected to the extent that Satan could not kill him.

Lou: But he had to trust in the truth.

Graham: It was the truth.

Lou: And Job was growing in understanding of what that truth was.

Graham: Even at the time. I can’t help but use Ellen White’s magnificent thoughts on this. She says to be like Job is to be so settled into the truth, both intellectually and spiritually, that one cannot be moved.

Now the Spirit brought him there, the truth brought him there. His conversations with God brought him there, it was all the doing of God, except that Job always said “Yes” to God. And if you can say “Yes” to God long enough the heavenly physician can heal us and bring us to the place where Job was. {Graham Maxwell. Excerpt from the audio series, Conversations About God, #17 with Lou Venden, “Satan’s Final Effort to Deceive” recorded May, 1984, Loma Linda, California} *To listen to the entire audio of the above reference, click on the following direct link:* <http://pkp.cc/17MMCAG>

Lou: But in Ephesians 3 are those words, “that through the church, the manifold wisdom of God might be made manifest.” This questioner would like you to elaborate on how you’re using the word *church* here. Are you talking about a denomination—church as an official organization?

Graham: Ah, that’s a fair question. It reminds me of our discussion last time, about all being in the family. Church has many meanings, doesn’t it? Like this building is church, or the organization is church. “Does the church permit thus and so”, we say. And then we have the interesting custom of speaking of Sabbath school and church, or Sunday school and church. Church is the 11 o’clock hour. I mean, church has many meanings. What would it mean here? We would have to go back to the original word. And the original word suggests *those who respond* to God’s invitation. It’s almost like *congregation*; we gather together. Or *synagogue*;

they gather together. These are all God's people everywhere, who respond to the invitation and at least profess they are his friends. And God works through these people. Now, he works and reveals himself through his treatment of everybody. But through certain people, like Abraham, and hence his descendants, God has especially worked. And they call it the *church in the wilderness*. Paul was a member of this church. And Jeremiah was a member of this church. We can all be members of this group of individuals who say "yes" to God, who respond to his call. We still need lots of work, lots of discipline, lots of correction, lots of healing. But at the same time, we have the privilege of joining with him in spreading this good news as to what he is like. And so God, through his church, his treatment of the church, through the cooperation of the church (which is a great privilege), has revealed his purposes and plans.

Now, this isn't any "denomination," that's for sure.

Lou: Is this what you're talking about then, when you talk about being witnesses? And Jesus says, "Ye are my witnesses."

Graham: Those would all be members of the church, that's for sure; the church of those who have come to trust in God again. And they enjoy the unity that is inherent in this trust, in Ephesians 4.

Lou: They would find something in common bonding them together, with that same trust that they have in our heavenly Father. {Graham Maxwell. Excerpt from the audio series, Conversations About God, #2 with Lou Venden, "What Went Wrong in God's Universe?" recorded January, 1984, Loma Linda, California} *To listen to the entire audio of the above reference, click on the following direct link: <http://pkp.cc/2MMCAG>*

Recommended Listening:

Conversations About God #17 "Satan's Final Effort to Deceive" is available at: <http://pkp.cc/17MMCAG>

Further Study with Ellen White

Notwithstanding the spiritual darkness and alienation from God that exist in the churches which constitute Babylon, the great body of Christ's true followers are still to be found in their communion. {GC 390.1}

"Be not therefore anxious for the morrow." Matthew 6:34, R. V. We are to follow Christ day by day. God does not bestow help for tomorrow. He does not give His children all the directions for their life journey at once, lest they should become confused. He tells them just as much as they can remember and perform. The strength and wisdom imparted are for the present

emergency. “If any of you lack wisdom,”—for today,—“let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him.” James 1:5. {DA 313.4}

God has a deep and earnest love for every member of the human family; not one is forgotten, not one is left helpless and deceived to be overcome by the enemy. And if those who have enlisted in the army of Christ will put on the whole armor of God, and wear it, they will be proof against all the assaults of the enemy. Those who really desire to be taught of God, and to walk in His way, have the sure promise that if they feel their lack of wisdom and ask of God, He will give liberally, and upbraid not. {FE 299.2}

God is our Father, and He will teach all who come to Him, realizing that their human wisdom is foolishness. As they take hold of His strength, and make peace with Him, living by His Word, He will unite His strength with their weakness, His knowledge with their ignorance, making them strong in Him. He will give them the care adapted to their necessities. Those who trust in Him as their Teacher will not stumble or fall.—Manuscript 88, June 18, 1902, “A Worldwide Work.” {UL 183.6}

Christ came to this earth in human form that He might stand as the Captain of our salvation, so that we should not be overcome by Satan’s power. And when the enemy has seemed to be gaining a signal victory over righteousness, God has been working in mercy and power to counteract his designs. {TDG 308.4}