

# SRMBC Family Bible Study

## Revelation - The Triumph of God

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### Lesson 11 Tearing Down Strongholds

Evil is a mystery. It often appears to us in the seeming good rather than the grotesquely wicked. It is multifaceted, pressuring us at many levels of our human experience: relational, financial, political and institutional life.

**Group Discussion.** What do you find most seductive about the culture and civilization in which you live?



When **Hank**, his socially challenged brother, **Jacob**, and his good friend **Lou** find a crashed plane and discovers a dead pilot and a duffel bag containing **\$4.4 million in cash**.

Hank's first instinct is to turn the money in to the proper authorities, but Jacob and Lou attempt to persuade him otherwise.

#### Questions:

- Hank's 1<sup>st</sup> instinct is to turn the money in – Do you agree with him? Why?

*I do agree with Hank. (Although I can think of too many times when I came up short in this area) Knowing what I*

- What were some of the “excuses” Lou and Jacob use to justify keeping the money?

*Nobody knows – except for us.*

*We/I have a financial need (a new baby coming)*

*This is a one-time chance to be rich.*

*The guy who the money belongs to is dead – he won't care*

*This is what everybody would do*

- How are some of the “excuses” used to justify giving into worldly/sinful temptations today?

*We use the same excuses to justify compromising our integrity*

- From a Christian perspective, what advice would you give to them?

*I would advise them that although people may not know or see where the money came from, God does and He expects us to do what's right. when we chose to gain anything dishonestly, it will have consequences that will be devastating.*

John wants to communicate the wonderful hope that God will completely overthrow evil and liberate God's family and God's creation. To do this he uses a double metaphor: the prostitute and the city of Babylon. The final end of these is greeted with the same mixed reaction as we have seen in all of God's saving acts.

**Read Revelation 17 - 18.**

1. What is so deceptively attractive about the evil cultures and world systems depicted here?

Spiritual Attraction	Temptation
17:2 with whom the kings of the earth committed fornication and the inhabitants of the earth were made drunk with the wine of her fornication."	Lust of the Flesh
17:4 The woman was arrayed in purple and scarlet and adorned with gold and precious stones and pearls having in her hand a golden cup full of abominations and the filthiness of her fornication.	Lust of the Flesh and Lust of the Eyes
17:12 The ten horns which you saw are ten kings who have received no kingdom as yet but they receive authority for one hour as kings with the beast.	The Pride of Life

2. What do you think the prostitute and Babylon represent in John's vision? What is the relationship of the prostitute and Babylon (17:5)?

- The prostitute represents satanic influences of sexual immorality (adultery) with spiritual infidelity (Jer. 3:9; Eze. 16:32).
- The prostitute and Babylon depict a world system that is habitually and commercially motivated towards Idolatry and Immorality.
- Babylon is prophetically depicted in Nebuchadnezzar's Statue Vision (Dan. 2:24 – 47).
- In John's day "Babylon" is represented by Rome – some believe that the Roman Empire will be revived as a fulfillment of End Times prophecy.



3. What is the relationship of the prostitute and the beast (17:7-8)?

- John identifies the prostitute with Babylon— the Old Testament symbol of a world empire exercising control over many nations.
- At the heart of it all is the Red Dragon (Satan, Rev. 12), who is the real motivating power of the beast.
- The harlot represents the sum total of pagan culture and idolatrous political power and false religion as she "rides" on the beast (17:7)

*"For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places." (Eph. 6:12)*

4. What is the relationship of the ten coming kings and the beast (17:12-14)?
- The meaning of the “ten horns” (17:12) is not so obvious (EU, UN, etc.).
  - What is clear is that are future kings that, along with the prostitute get their power from the beast (17:12).
  - Whoever they are, their reign will be brief and unimportant because the Lamb is supreme and will triumph.
5. As we are the Lamb’s followers will triumph along with Him (17:14). Another angel announces the fall of Babylon (18:1-8). Why is it important for God’s people to “come out of her” (18:4)?
- Compromising with the world, while it may bring temporary pleasures/success will ultimately bring dissatisfaction.
  - We can either love Christ or love the things of this world, but not both. God deserves and has commanded us to love Him.
  - The Babylon system is not going to stand under the judgement of God – we don’t want to be caught up in the destruction.
- “They are not of the world, just as I am not of the world.” (John 17:16)*
6. How does the prostitute see herself (18:7-8)? What do we learn from this about the influence of evil in this world?

#### **How The Prostitute Sees Herself**

- She glorifies Herself – sees herself perfect without fault.
- Greedy and selfish – living in ultra-prosperity without regard for God or others.
- Full of herself and believes she is in total control of everything.

#### **What We Learn About Evil**

- Evil is deceptive - it sounds good on the surface.
  - Evil is arrogant/prideful – It is all about me.
  - Evil eventually will be judged swiftly and completely by God.
7. Note the reasons why the kings (18:9-10), merchants (18:11-17) and sea captains (18:17-20) are sorry at the demise of the world system (18:9-20). How do you think the demise of our own culture would be greeted?
- The Kings: ‘Alas, alas, that great city Babylon, that mighty city! For in one hour your judgment has come.’

- The Merchants: ‘Alas, alas, that great city... in one hour such great riches came to nothing.’
- Every Shipmaster: ‘What is like this great city?’ ...in one hour, she is made desolate.’

People today are so in love with the World System - because it brings the pleasures we enjoy. It stands to reason that world would lament its destruction as well.

**Note:** “In Rev. 18:20, John is not gloating over the city’s downfall. He is appealing to Christians to see the realities of the situation and to act accordingly” - Leon Morris

8. What have you learned about resisting the temptation to compromise in a dangerously hostile society or a deceptively friendly one?

#### **Hostile Society:**

- As the coming of Christ gets closer, the world becomes more hostile.
- Now more than ever it is time to stand up for God and His truth.
- No matter how intense the attacks against our faith, God’s will and word is going to prevail in the end.

#### **“Friendly” Society:**

- The most dangerous enemy is not the one that growls at you, but the one that “smiles” at you.
- Compromise – even a small one, with the world brings destruction and pain that far outweighs any good.
- Just because something looks good, sounds good or feels good doesn’t mean it is good or Godly.

*Pray for those who are struggling against Satan.*

### *Keys For Living*



Even though we are believers, saved and filled with the Holy Spirit, we need to recognize that evil is still all around us. We must be diligent in prayer, worship and the Word – depending on the Lord, lest we fall.



Although evil seems to be increasing, God’s true and right ways are always the same. Despite every temptation God has promised to give us a way of escape or the grace to bear up under it (I Cor 10:13)



Christians can be encouraged that this evil rebellious world will not stand. Jesus has already won the victory and the Father has set a time when He will bring all things under His righteous rule.