

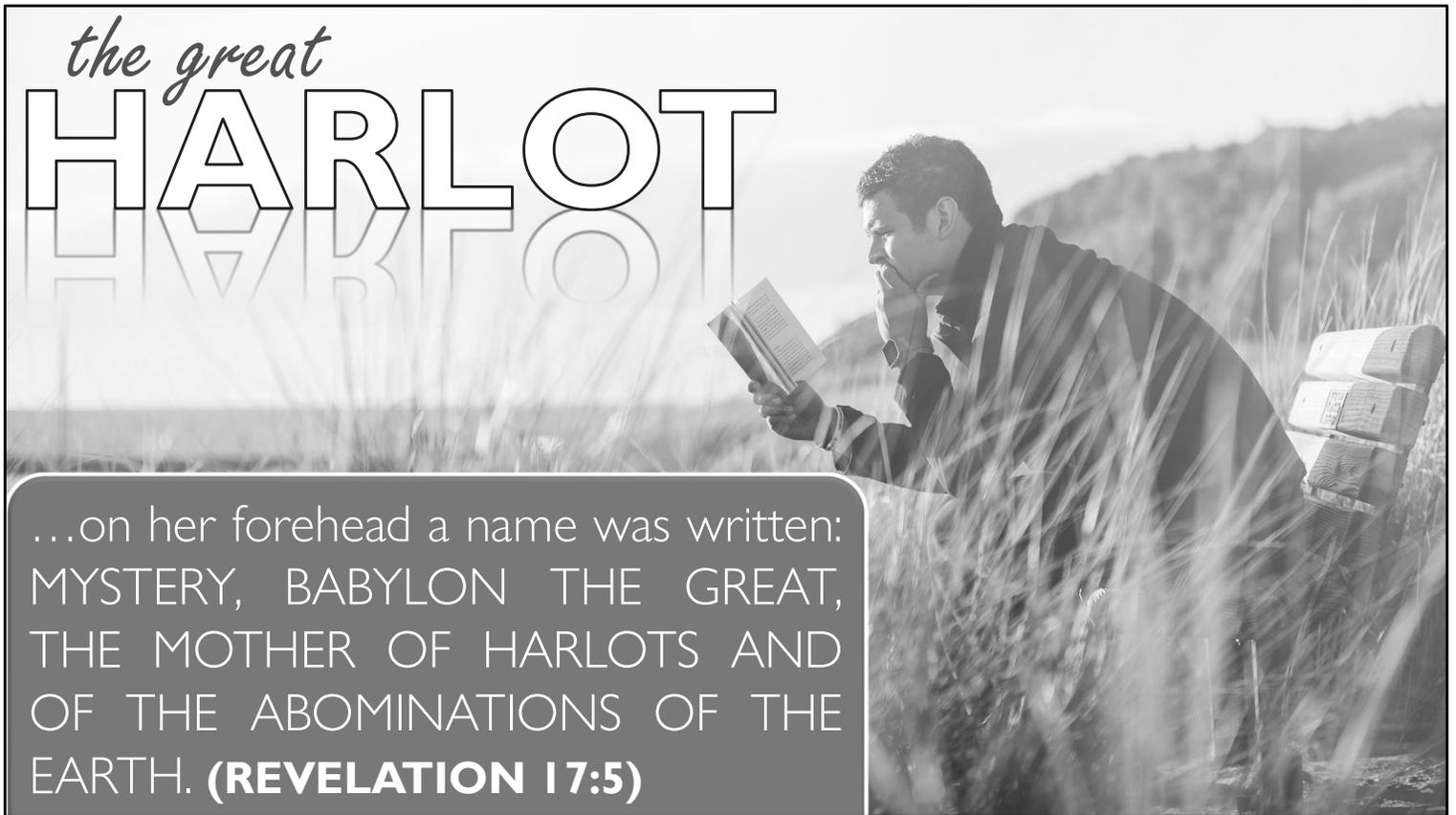


– an uncluttered approach –

SIMPLIFYING

REVELATION

- The 7 angels of ch. 16 poured out the bowls of God's wrath upon the kingdom of the beast and those who follow him, and revealed the victory of the Lord and His people over the dragon.
- Now, the judgment against Babylon is discussed in greater detail.



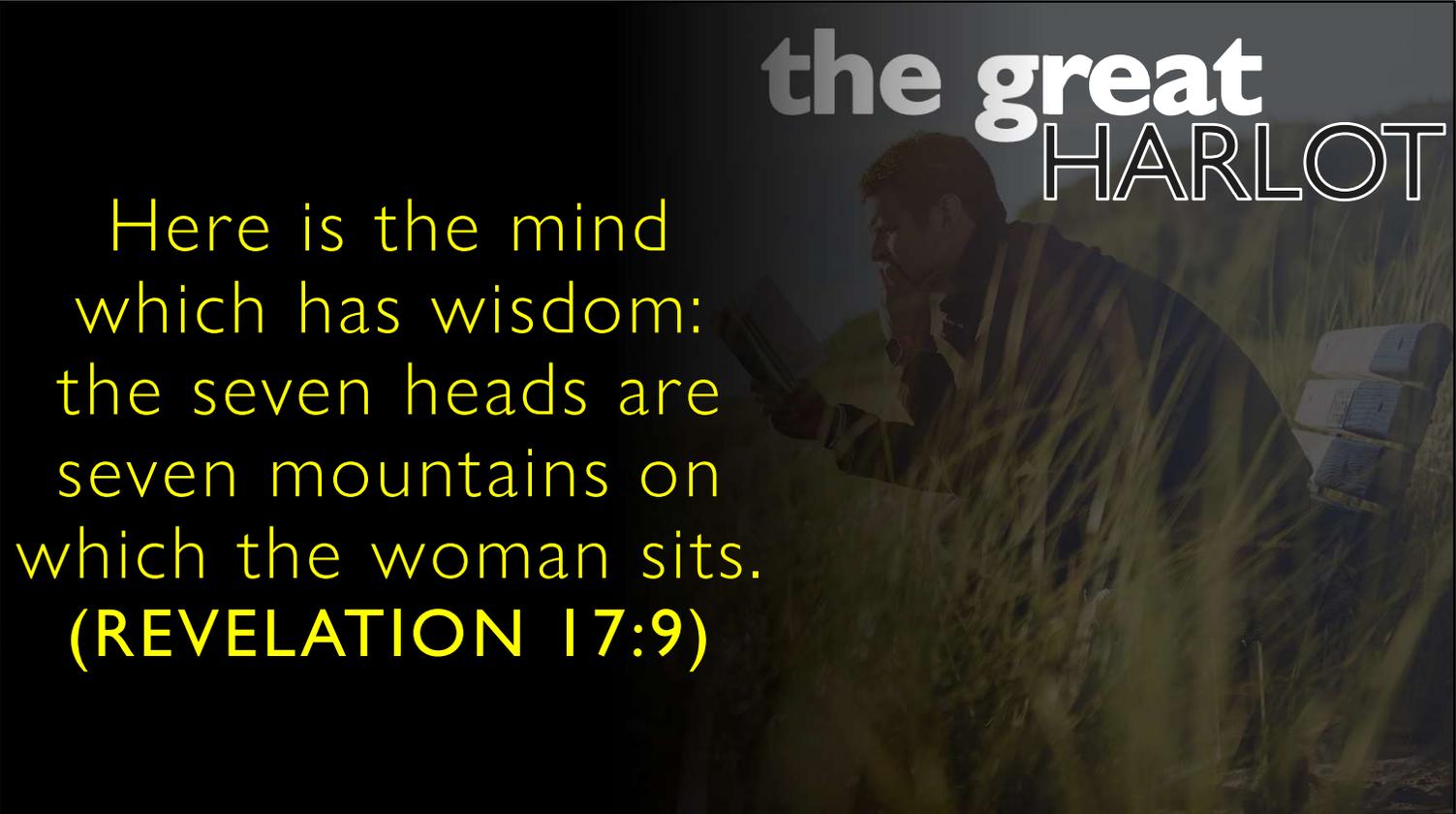
...on her forehead a name was written: MYSTERY, BABYLON THE GREAT, THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS AND OF THE ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH. **(REVELATION 17:5)**

- 17:1-2 – one of the seven angels from ch. 16 invited John to see the judgment of Babylon.
 - He uses the image of a “great harlot” to speak about Babylon.
 - The image of the harlot is used frequently in the Bible...
 - Isa 1:21, Israel had become a harlot...
 - Jer 2:20; 3:1, 6, 8, Judah had played the harlot
 - Eze 16:15-16, 28, 31, 35, 41, those who turned from the Lord
 - Tyre (Isaa 23:15-16) & Nineveh (Nah 3:4-7) were harlots...
 - The term conjures the idea of promiscuity and faithlessness; of a seducer who would lead others away from what is right and just.
- 17:3 – John is taken into the wilderness where he saw a

woman sitting on a beast full of names of blasphemy, having 7 heads & 10 horns.

- This is NOT the same wilderness as found in 12:6, 14 (God's protection).
- This is a barren wilderness – a place characterized by the sin of the harlot.
- The description of the beast is similar to the dragon (12:3) and the beast from the sea (13:1).
- 17:4 – the harlot is pictured as being wealthy, but her wealth are the things that will perish. (remember Jesus' contrast of treasures in heaven & treasures on earth, Mt 6:19-21).
- 17:5 – she does not hide her wickedness – **IT'S TATTOOED ON HER HEAD!!!**
- 17:6 – among her deeds, like the dragon and the beast, she killed the people of God.
 - John marveled (17:6)
 - It was quite the sight.
 - Not with desire, but in shock, in amazement.
 - He did not fully comprehend what he saw.
 - 17:7 – the angel would reveal the mystery of the woman and the beast to him.

the great HARLOT



Here is the mind
which has wisdom:
the seven heads are
seven mountains on
which the woman sits.
(REVELATION 17:9)

- 17:8 – the beast “*was and is not.*” This is a contrast with the Lord, “who is and who was and who is to come” (1:8; 4:8).
 - The beast is mortal; the beast has an end (as per Rev 13).
 - It is said to “*ascend out of the pit and go to perdition.*” – it is portrayed as a defeated beast.
 - But, “*those who dwell on the earth will marvel.*” – though it is defeated, the wicked (those not in the Book of Life) still marvel at the beast and its power.
- 17:9 – “*Here is the mind which has wisdom*”
 - Similar to 13:18, “**HERE IS WISDOM.**” The observant will note this, and will find comfort or encouragement from it.
 - 17:9b – The seven heads are seven mountains.
 - Mountains are often used to speak of kingdoms (Isa

2:1-4; Mic 4:1-3; Dan).

- He tells us they are “*also seven kings*” (17:10).
- The image is authority. She, Babylon, sits upon or derives power from authorities.
- Some have linked these mountains with those which Rome is set upon, the woman with Rome itself, and the kings with her emperors.
- The image is a figure representing world and social powers which have sided with the dragon and beast. Does Rome fit? Sure. But not exclusively.
- “Seven kings” – not literal, the number conveys the idea of completeness.
 - V 11 – the beast is “the eighth, and is of the seven”
 - We’re not counting rulers here – the idea is completeness and the extent of the power in the image.
- “Five have fallen...”
 - Their glory is not lasting. It will fade away.
 - The power of the beast is described as fleeting, almost ready to expire.
- 17:12 – the ten horns are ten kings.

- Again, not literal, it is another image of completeness.
- There are not 17 kings pictured in the text – the authority of the beast is characterized as complete, but fleeting.
- They receive authority for 1 hour!!
- Their authority and power of the beast is limited. It is passing.
- 17:13 – many nations and powers are willing to give their power to the beast.
 - Recall the dragon gathering together whatever he could muster in preparation for Armageddon (ch. 16).
 - However, those who support the beast, who set their authority at his disposal will fall to the King of kings with him (v 14).
- Let's pause here for a moment to discuss who this Harlot, Babylon is, and who the beast which she sits upon is.
 - These are new images, but they are not new characters.
 - In chapter 13, two beasts were introduced who work together to turn people to the dragon.
 - A lot of the focus there was on ideology and political or social powers.
 - There was falsehood and false religion which supported these ideologies.
 - In the harlot (Babylon) and the beast, we've got the

same relationship, just repackaged.

- However the focus now is not on ideology, politics and social powers. It is more base than that.
- Notice the words that have been used:
 - Fornication (6x in ch. 17-18);
 - A focus on wealth & luxury (17:4; 18:3, 9, 12-16, 19)
- The harlot carries the idea of enticement – not necessarily to fornication (that’s the image), but to sin in general. To engage in the passing pleasure of sin.
- The beast represents power, authority – when sinful practices gain approval of those who are in power, the spread of sin is made that much easier.

...the ten horns which you saw on the beast, these will hate the harlot, make her desolate and naked, eat her flesh and burn her with fire. (v 16)



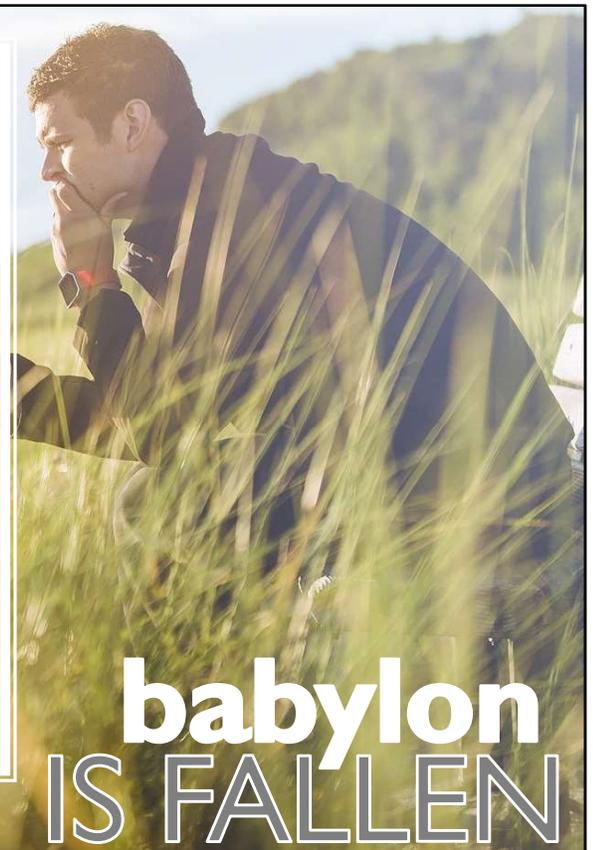
the great **HARLOT**

- 17:15 – she sits upon many waters (v 1).
 - The waters are described as peoples, multitudes, nations and tongues.
 - Thus, her wicked influence, given power by the beast upon which she rides reaches far – over the majority of the population.
- 17:16 – the kings were pictured as part of the beast (v 7).
 - However, they hate her and seek to destroy her.
 - They share unity in the beast (v 12-13), are associated with the harlot, and yet chaos and destruction are inherent in the relationship.
 - Where evil and sin prevail, we can expect to see destruction and self-consuming activity.
 - Such is the relationship of the harlot and the kings of the earth.

- 17:17 – God’s hand is in the chaos and destruction.
 - He does not cause their wickedness, nor approve of the harlot, but He uses their evil desires to execute His own will.
 - Examples...
 - Joseph’s brothers selling him as a slave;
 - Pharaoh’s arrogance & unwillingness to let Israel go;
 - Assyria’s quest for global domination (used against Israel);
 - Babylon’s aspiration for world domination (used against Judah);
 - Judas’ love of money (betrayed Jesus for silver)
 - Pilate’s plight – between a rock & a hard place, he chose to put to death an innocent man.
 - God can work through man’s evil choices and pride to accomplish His will.
- 17:18 – the chapter ends with an explanation...
 - The woman is that great city which reigns over the kings of the earth.
 - The woman is Babylon (14:8; 16:19).
 - She is a means of enticement, Satan’s poster child, if you will.

- She captures the attention of people, ,wowing them by her attributes.
- She's the advertisement used by the beast to draw people in.
- Consider in the parable of the prodigal son (Luke 15) how he was enticed to the far away city. Same deal.

Babylon the great **is fallen, is fallen**, and has become a dwelling place of demons, a prison for every foul spirit, and a cage for every unclean and hated bird! (REVELATION 18:2)



- 18:1 – another angel came to show John more.
- 18:2 – It would appear Babylon was **NOT SO GREAT**.
 - Isaiah 21:9 reads: *“Babylon is fallen, is fallen! And all the carved images of her gods He has broken to the ground.”*
 - Isaiah said this about 150 years before Babylon fell to the Medes & Persians.
 - Ancient Babylon would be overthrown & left desolate because of her wickedness.
 - The say is true of spiritual Babylon.
 - Before men she portrayed herself as great, beautiful and enticing.
 - Before God, she is fallen and destroyed. She becomes a ghost town, a memory, a dwelling place for demons.
- 18:3 – her rise to “success” was through sensuality, through

appealing lusts.

- The people enjoyed her and profited from her.
- The kings of the earth, the merchants were glad to share in her evil deeds.
- Now they share in her destruction.
- 18:4-5 – God’s people are warned to stay away.
 - We cannot partake of her deeds and without also partaking of her destruction. Ro 6:23, *“...the wages of sin is death...”*
 - There is always a temptation to compromise – to fit in, to join the crowd, to enjoy the passing pleasure of sin.
 - Come out, don’t have fellowship with wickedness – don’t get caught up in her judgment.
- V 6 – her wickedness will not go unpunished. Those who engage in evil will have it visited upon them.
 - Repay “double.” The repayment for sin would exceed the original offense.
 - Isa 40:2, Jerusalem “...received from the LORD’s hand double for all her sins.”
 - Jer 16:18, “...I will repay double for their iniquity and their sin...”
 - Jer 17:18, “...destroy them with double

destruction.”

- Eze 21:14, “...let the sword do double damage.”
- Why double? The exercise of justice & punishment.
- V 7 – She once gloried in her luxury and selfishness, now she is measured out torment and sorrow.
 - To the extent she lived in luxury, now let her live in torment.
 - Nothing of the former luxury remains. It is replaced by an equal and offsetting measure of torment.
- V 7 – Notice her delusion, “...*I sit as queen, and am no widow, and will not see sorrow*”
 - Satan would have all believe that wickedness is luxurious & great, and without consequence.
 - Wickedness is a disease that deludes the mind and causes one to reject reality.
 - Even in the face of torment & sorrow, she is defiant.
- V 8 – the destruction is swift – within a day.
 - An interesting picture based on ancient Babylon’s fall.

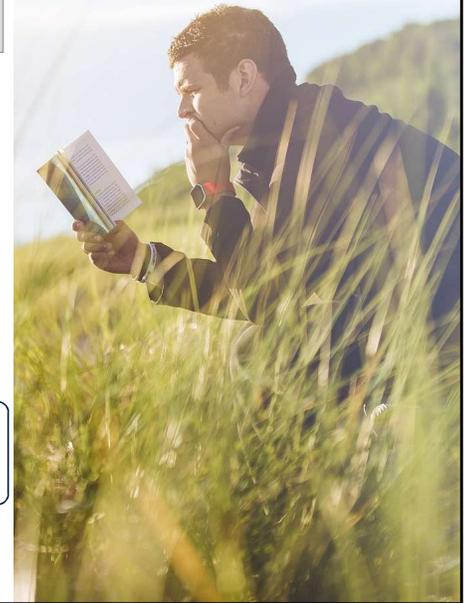
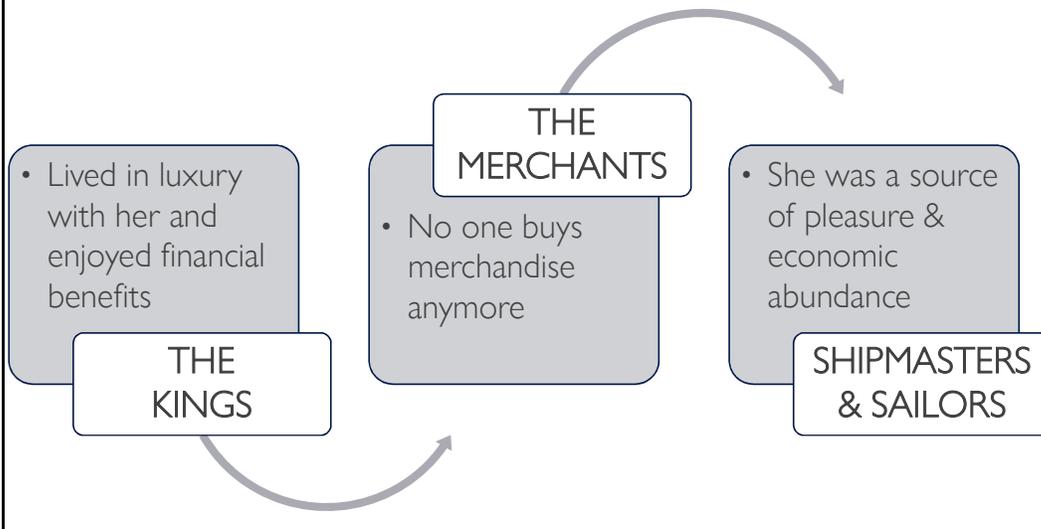
- Their haughtiness resulted in their defeat.

...in one hour your judgment has come. (18:10)

...in one hour such great riches
came to nothing. (18:17)

...in one hour she is made desolate. (18:19)

REACTION TO BABYLON'S DESTRUCTION



• 18:9-10 – the **KINGS OF THE EARTH.**

- Kings – political or national leaders.
- Not that the average citizen does not also partake of what the harlot has to offer, but generally as goes the leader, so goes the nation.
- Yielding to temptation & sin is easier than standing against it.
- Being permissive is more widely accepted than holding to a firm moral standard.
- The kings of the earth found their association with Babylon brought with it luxury (a strong economy).
- But material goods are no guarantee of permanence, especially when it is based in wickedness.
- Economy is not the true measure of a nation.
- Again, we see the **SWIFTNESS** of the judgment against

Babylon (18:10).

- 18:11-17a – the **MERCHANTS OF THE EARTH**.
 - Sin is big business. Many businesses are based upon wickedness today.
 - Backroom deals, bribery and such are sadly common place in commerce today.
 - Much of what is mentioned (v 12-13) would be materialism.
 - But notice at the end, “*bodies and souls of men*” (v 13b).
 - Those seem odd in a discussion of merchandise.
 - Trafficking, whether for slave trade or sex trade.
 - Once more, we see the **SWIFTNESS** of the judgment against Babylon (18:17a).
- 18:17b-19 – the **SHIPMASTERS** and sailors.
 - Many of the luxuries and riches (enticing temptations) that would be associated with Babylon make their way from place to place through the seaports (imports, exports, etc.).
 - These mentioned are benefactors of a relationship to Babylon, both through economics and experience of pleasure.
 - Notice their statement, “*What is like this great city?*” (v 18)

- But, again the **SWIFTNESS** of her judgment is mentioned (18:19b).
- Notice the lament of all – the kings, the merchants, the shipmasters & sailors – it is rooted in selfishness.
 - The concern is not for any who may suffer harm or injury in such a massive destruction;
 - The concern is how Babylon’s destruction has affected ME and my material wealth.

LAMENTATION FOR TYRE

"I am perfect in beauty" (Eze 27:3)

They will "...take up a lamentation, and lament for you: 'What city is like Tyre...?' You satisfied many people, you enriched the kings of the earth with your many luxury goods and your merchandise. ...the inhabitants of the isles will be astonished at you, their kings will be greatly afraid, their countenance will be troubled..." (Eze 27:32-36)



- It is interesting to note the similarity between our text in Revelation 18 and the lamentation for Tyre in Ezekiel 26-28.
- Of course in Ezekiel 27, there's no reason to think what is written is not about literal Tyre; v 2, *"...son of man, take up a lamentation for Tyre..."*
- Recall in Rev 18:7, Babylon said of herself, *"I sit as queen, and am no widow, and will not see sorrow."*
 - Tyre wore the same blinders, declaring, *"I am **PERFECT IN BEAUTY**"* (Eze 27:3).
 - Further, in 28:2, *"I am a god, I sit in the seat of gods, in the midst of the seas."*
- Revelation 18 focused on the material wealth associated with Babylon (luxury, merchandise, gold, silver, precious stones, pearls, fine linen & purple, silk & scarlet, ivory, precious woods, bronze, iron & marble, cinnamon & incense,

fragrant oil & frankincense, wine and oils, fine flour & wheat, etc..

- Ezekiel 27 speaks about the beautiful woods, ivory, embroidered linens, silver, iron, tin and lead, emeralds, rubies, honey, oil, balm, etc.
- Both Revelation 18 and Ezekiel 27 speak about the bartering and trading of human lives.
- We've seen the lament of the kings, the merchants & the sailors for Babylon.
 - **EZE 27:32-36** – the people associated with Tyre would lament over losing her.
 - Ezek 26:16-18, *"...the princes of the sea will come down from their thrones, lay aside their robes, take off their embroidered garments ... and be astonished at you. They will take up a lamentation for you, and say to you: 'How you have perished, O one inhabited by seafaring men, O renowned city... the coastlands tremble on the day of your fall; yes the coastlands by the sea are troubled at your departure.'"*
- Why bring this up? To point out that John is borrowing from language of judgment used previously.
 - Formerly, by Ezekiel concerning the fall of Tyre, an ancient city.

- Now, by John, concerning the fall of Babylon the great, not the ancient city, but the representation of Satan's influence over the nations.



**The great city Babylon shall be thrown down,
AND SHALL NOT BE FOUND ANYMORE**

- 18:20 – Rejoice, God’s people – you are avenged.
 - God accomplished what He said He would do.
 - He has avenged the trials brought upon His people by the wicked.
 - Babylon is destroyed, God’s people are glorified.
- 18:21-24 – the throwing of the millstone is symbolic, representing the **COMPLETE DESTRUCTION** of Babylon.
 - “...the great city Babylon shall be thrown down, and shall not be found anymore.”
 - V 22 – the sound of music would no longer be found (**JOY & GLADNESS** are gone);
 - V 22 – no craftsman shall be found (**BUSINESS & PROGRESS** are gone);
 - V 22 – no millstone shall be found (**NO FOOD**, sustenance is gone);
 - V 23 – no light of a lamp shall be found (**DARKNESS**,

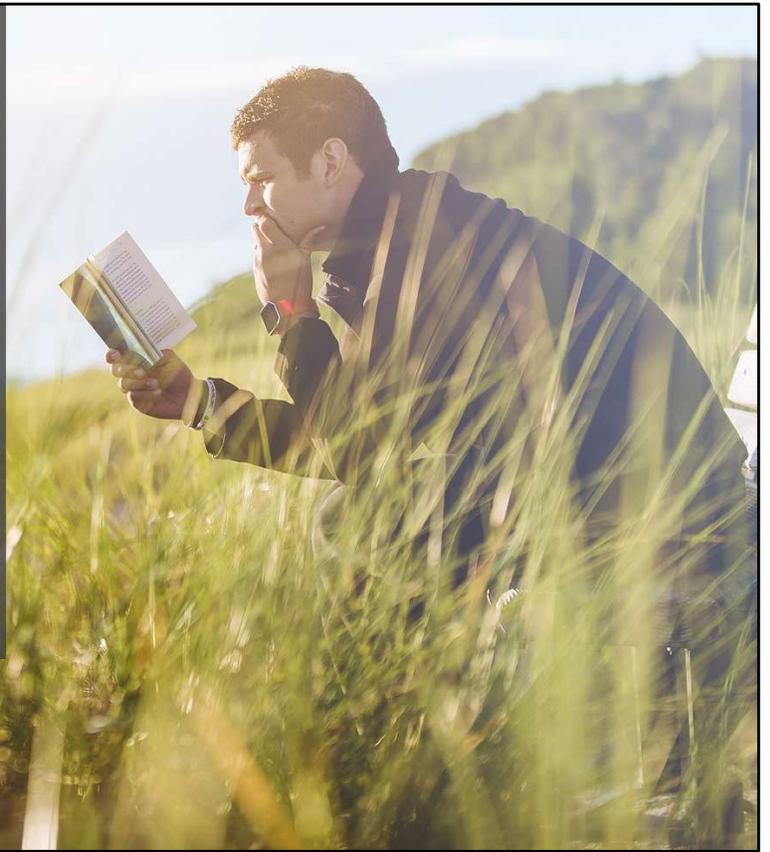
destitution);

- V 23 – voice of the bridegroom & bride shall not be found (**SILENCE**, desolation)
- v 23b – the deception of Babylon has now ended.
- V 24 – not only deception, but violence against God's people.
- Babylon and all that was in her would be destroyed, her deeds came back upon her in the end.

Next week...

- ❖ The Marriage Supper of the Lamb
- ❖ Another Supper...
- ❖ The Thousand Year Reign

REVELATION 19-20



Ch. 19-20, the marriage supper of the Lamb, another supper (judgment), the 1000 year reign.