**Lesson XIII**

**Revelation Chapters 17 & 18**

**The Consequences of Sin**

**INTRODUCTION:** The judgment of the Great Harlot had already been pronounced in 14:8. Now it is visualized.

1. **THE NATURE AND HISTORY OF THE GREAT HARLOT BABYLON**(17:1-18)
2. (vs. 1)
3. “The many waters” will be explained in verse 15.
4. The “Great Harlot” is Babylon according to verse 18.
5. See also Isaiah 23:16 and Nahum 3:4.
6. Why is Babylon referred to as a harlot?
7. (vs. 2)
8. “Those who dwell on the earth” are those who do not have the mind of Christ.
9. The words “harlot” and “immorality” come from the same Greek word from which we get our word “pornography”.
10. Immorality and drunkenness go together in a sinful world. However, the symbolism carries us beyond the literal meaning to portray that estrange state of mankind who refuse to live in harmony with God’s will and degrades himself with Satanic living.
11. (vs. 3)
12. The “wilderness” where John received his vision is a desolation of evil.
13. The “scarlet beast” is the beast of 13:1.
14. (vs. 4) Description of the woman
15. She is completely different from the woman in chapter 12.
16. Her garments indicate great wealth.
17. The contents of her golden cup suggest wickedness.
18. See Psalm 73:3.
19. To the world the woman looks attractive, but the real person is known by the contents of her cup.
20. (vs. 5)
21. The identity of the woman is made clear upon her forehead. It was the practice during the days of the Roman Empire for prostitutes to identify themselves with names written on headbands and worn.
22. “Mystery” means that it is symbolic and subject to be made known.
23. As a “mother” we are convinced of the character of her offspring.
24. (vs. 6)
25. The “saints” include those before the time of Christ.
26. John’s wonder is amazement, not admiration.
27. (vss. 7-8)
28. The angel is going to reveal the mystery.
29. The beast is Satanic world power.
30. “Was and is not, and is about to come”

**Possible explanations:**
31. The similarity of Domitian (A.D. 96) to Nero (A.D. 63) as a person and as an emperor.
32. The belief of the resurrection of Nero.
33. A constant revival of Satanic world power.

“In contrast with the never-dying life of God, world power is constantly passing away to be reborn in new forms which in their turn perish. Three stages are marked out in the existence of world power: it was, it is not now, it ascends from the bottomless pit to go into destruction. The ascending from the bottomless pit and the going into destruction indicate permanent attributes of the beast rather than single episodes in his career (11:7). This existence, nonexistence with existence, and subsequent reappearances describes the same truth as expressed by the mortal wound that has healed (13:3). Evil seems to disappear, but it only appears to do so.”

Ray Robbins, The Revelation of Jesus Christ, p. 198.

1. (vs. 9)
2. “Mountains” symbolizes great elevation.
3. The woman sits exalted as a world power.

“Some see a resemblance to Rome, a city built on seven hills. Perhaps so, but there is more to this picture. Rome simply offers a prime example of power in opposition to God.”

Glenn Bourne, Tower of Truth, p. 170

1. (vs. 10)
2. The “seven heads” are equivalent to “seven mountains” and “seven kings”, but the perspective is different in each instance.
3. Satanic power is being visualized as intelligent, powerful, elevated, strong, and having authority.

“Who are the five, the one, and the other? Some make them refer to the emperors of Rome, but it is a guess as to which emperor you should start with unless you are certain of the date of Revelation. Another suggestion is that Rome was the sixth of the great world powers, the first being Egypt, followed by Assyria, Babylon, Persia, and Greece. Commentators add other meanings. At any point there is opposition to God, but the continuance of this opposition is limited - He must remain a little while.”

Glenn Bourne, Tower of Truth, p. 171.

1. (vs. 11)
2. The eighth is like the seventh.
3. In apocalyptic language, eight was an all-inclusive number for the totality of all supernatural powers.
4. What John is saying is that one after another the kingdoms of the world fall; then, the last of all, that apparent supernatural power which sustains them all should go to destruction.
5. As strong and intelligent as the beast may be, his end will be in hell. (See Revelation 19:20 and 20:10)
6. (vs. 12)
7. Horns symbolize power and strength.
8. Ten symbolizes completeness.
9. Kings symbolize authority in the political arena.
10. The relationship of the kings with the beast indicates lesser powers subservient to the greater power of the beast.
11. The ten horns may signify all the various Satanic powers that combine to make the beast, the totality of all Satanic dominion.
12. “One hour” indicates a short but definite period of time. The power of the kings is limited
13. (vs. 13) The devil’s propaganda is effective in uniting evil powers for the accomplishment of his will. The “one purpose” is Satan’s purpose.
14. (vs. 14) See chapter 16 and the discussion of Armageddon.
15. (vss. 15-16)
16. “These will hate the harlot.”
17. Sin that is a great delight in the beginning becomes a disappointment in the end.
18. Some see the initial fulfillment of this verse in the fall of Rome in A.D. 476.
19. (vs. 17)
20. God manifests His greatness by making the works of Satan accomplish His own glory.
21. God’s purpose cannot be defeated by Satanic power.
22. (vs. 18) Throughout history Satanic world power has dominated the kings of the earth.

The theme of the chapter: world power is great, but it is doomed to hell.
23. **THE FALL OF THE GREAT HARLOT BABYLON (18:1-24)**
24. The Announcement of Another Angel (vss. 1-3)
25. See also 14:8
26. “the wealth of her sensuality” - anything unrestrained and undisciplined.
27. Another Voice from Heaven (vss. 4-7)
28. (vs. 4) The call to holiness.
29. (vs. 5) When we begin to think that God allows evil to go unhindered as if He were not even aware of it, we need to read this verse to be reminded that nothing misses the attention of God.
30. (vs. 6) Picture the old-fashioned scales. In this verse God is called to even the scales. “Double” pictures punishment as extreme but only because her sin is great.
31. (vs. 7)
32. “She glorified herself” by putting herself on public display.
33. “I sit as a queen”. (See Luke 12:16-21)
34. (vs. 8)
35. “In one day” indicates suddenness.
36. The plagues that come up on her.

”pestilence” - death, eternal separation from God.

“mourning” - a continual state of sadness and grief.

“famine” - state of desperate need.

“burn with fire” - complete destruction.

1. Three Dirges or Songs of Mourning (vss. 9-19)
2. The kings of the earth (vss. 9-10) mourn because of the destruction of the city affects their own power.
3. The merchants of the earth (vss. 11-17a)
4. This long list of goods is given to underscore that which can draw man’s attention away from God.
5. The merchant’s means of profit is lost.
6. The mariners (vss. 17a-19): Those who travel by sea have lost the reason for traveling.
7. Call to Rejoice (vs. 20)
How do we reconcile this verse with Ezekiel 13:11?
8. The Strong Angel (vs. 21) “Millstone” assures that whatever is attached to it will never come up again.
9. Every Aspect of Life Comes to an End. (Vss. 22-23)
10. (vs. 24) Can anyone question the judgment of God upon seeing the “blood of prophets and of saints and of all who have been slain upon the earth” flowing from Babylon?