

ORDER FOR THE CORPORATE WORSHIP OF GOD
A Service of Celebration and Covenantal Renewal

GATHERING MUSIC

WELCOME

INVOCATION

CALL TO WORSHIP

Psalms 92:6-9 (NIV)

6 The senseless man does not know,
fools do not understand,

7 that though the wicked spring up like grass
and all evildoers flourish,
they will be forever destroyed.

8 But you, O LORD, are exalted forever.

9 For surely your enemies, O LORD,
surely your enemies will perish;
all evildoers will be scattered.

WORSHIP THROUGH SONG

Lyric sheets of today's music can be obtained from the ushers upon request

PASTORAL PRAYER

MINISTRY OF THE WORD, PART I

—SCOTTY SMITH

UNVEILED HOPE

THE VINDICATION OF HOPE: GOD WILL DESTROY EVIL
A Tale of Two Cities—Revelation 17:1-19:5

Evil will not prevail! That is the predominant theme of the later section of the book of Revelation. In rich symbol, dramatic metaphor, and powerful allegory, John is given insight into the culmination of the conflict that has gone on since sin first entered into the hearts of men—a conflict which intensified with the first arrival of Jesus Christ. In chapters 17:1-19:5 "Babylon", the great whore, is brought under judgment. Let us be encouraged about her destruction, and warned about her seductions! For there are only two "cities" which make claims on our hearts between the two comings of Christ: Babylon and the New Jerusalem, or Augustine put it, The City of Man and the City of God. As followers of Jesus, we are called to live by the light and hope of the New Jerusalem, the city whose builder and maker is God. And we are called to bring the first fruits of **that City** into the cities where God has placed us to live out the implications of the gospel of transforming grace.

I. BABYLON—The City and Seductions of Evil

Revelation 17:1-6 1 One of the seven angels who had the seven bowls came and said to me, "**Come, I will show you the punishment of the great prostitute, who sits on many waters.** 2 With her the kings of the earth committed adultery and the inhabitants of the earth were intoxicated with the wine of her adulteries." 3 Then the angel carried me away in the Spirit into a desert. There I saw a woman sitting on a scarlet beast that was covered with blasphemous names and had seven heads and ten horns. 4 The woman was dressed in purple and scarlet, and was glittering with gold, precious stones and pearls. She held a golden cup in her hand, filled with abominable things and the filth of her adulteries. 5 This title was written on her forehead: **MYSTERY BABYLON THE GREAT THE MOTHER OF PROSTITUTES AND OF THE ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH.** 6 I saw that the woman was drunk with the blood of the saints, the blood of those who bore testimony to Jesus. When I saw her, I was greatly astonished.

Judgment has already been pronounced on "Babylon" in Rev. 16:19, but Christians are warned by this Scripture not to take her allurements and temptations lightly. This harlot represents the seductive and deadly attractiveness of the beast's kingdom. She represents what the New Testament refers to as "the world", civilization ordered in antagonism and indifference to the will of God and to God, Himself. "She is the symbol of all that corrupts and degrades human society, all its lust and lechery, its craft and deceit, its violence and tyranny, its hatred and squalor and injustice." (Hughes) She rides on the "beast", the "sea beast" of Rev.13:1f, symbolizing the collaboration of evil throughout history.

The Collaboration and Collapse of Evil: Rev.17:7-14 Then the angel said to me: "Why are you astonished? I will explain to you the mystery of the woman and of the beast she rides, which has the seven heads and ten horns. 8 The beast, which you saw, once was, now is not, and **will come up out of the Abyss and go to his destruction.** The inhabitants of the earth whose

names have not been written in the book of life from the creation of the world will be astonished when they see the beast, because he once was, now is not, and yet will come. 9 "This calls for a mind with wisdom. The seven heads are seven hills on which the woman sits. 10 They are also seven kings. Five have fallen, one is, the other has not yet come; but when he does come, he must remain for a little while. 11 The beast who once was, and now is not, is an eighth king. He belongs to the seven and **is going to his destruction**. 12 "The ten horns you saw are ten kings who have not yet received a kingdom, but who for one hour will receive authority as kings along with the beast. 13 They have one purpose and will give their power and authority to the beast. 14 **They will make war against the Lamb, but the Lamb will overcome them because he is Lord of lords and King of kings -- and with him will be his called, chosen and faithful followers.**

"This "woman" and "beast" may be enjoying "their moment" but their demise is well under the control of God! Notice the language of rise, demise and rejuvenation with respect to the work of evil in our world. Suffice it to say that there is going to be a final vomiting of Satan's influence and power in the world in the last of the last days. Followers of Jesus are to rejoice that their names are written in the Lamb's Book of Life, and engage in faithful discipleship until he returns!

The "seven heads" - Any first century reader would see this as a reference to the city of Rome, the "City of Seven Hills". Rome became a symbol of great evil and wickedness. But the "seven heads" are also 7 kings or kingdoms. Before the advent of the Roman Empire, there had been five major world kingdoms: The Old Babylonian, the Assyrian, the New Babylonian, the Mede-Persian, and the Greco-Macedonian Empires, all fallen by the time of Rome. Rome is the 6th Kingdom. The "final kingdom" is not limited to geographical or political boundaries, for it transcends all earthly lines of demarcation. The 7th kingdom is in the world today—It is the world today!"

The "ten horns" - "Ten" meaning wholeness or completeness, leads us to believe that these 10 kings stand for all of the smaller and less significant kingdoms which have risen during this age, all of which have sided with the beast, all of which have permeated God's creation with evil influence and whose one goal is to make war against the Lamb. **BUT THE LAMB PREVAILS!** The beast is overcome by a Lamb!

The Providential Self-Destruction of Evil: Rev. 17:15-18 *Then the angel said to me, "The waters you saw, where the prostitute sits, are peoples, multitudes, nations and languages. 16 The beast and the ten horns you saw will hate the prostitute. They will bring her to ruin and leave her naked; they will eat her flesh and burn her with fire. 17 **For God has put it into their hearts to accomplish his purpose by agreeing to give the beast their power to rule, until God's words are fulfilled.** 18 The woman you saw is the great city that rules over the kings of the earth."*

Satan's kingdom will ultimately be divided against itself and fall! (Matt.12:26) Evil will finally crumble beneath the weight of its own wickedness and corruption. There is pleasure in sin only for a season and then comes destruction. Again, notice and rejoice in the great theme of the sovereignty of God over all things, including the boundaries He has placed on evil and Satan's kingdom! God's promises will be fulfilled, every last one of them!

GIVING OF TITHES AND OFFERINGS

MINISTRY OF THE WORD, PART 2

— SCOTT ROLEY

II. THE FINAL AND FATAL FALL OF BABYLON

Woes for the City of Evil! Rev 18:1 *After this I saw another angel coming down from heaven. He had great authority, and the earth was illuminated by his splendor. 2 With a mighty voice he shouted: "Fallen! Fallen is Babylon the Great!"... Rev. 18:10 "Woe! Woe! O great city, O Babylon, city of power! **In one hour your doom has come!**" (Think of Martin Luther's great line in A Mighty Fortress Is Our God: "...One little word will fell him"!)*

Rejoicing for the City of God! Rev. 18:20-21 *Rejoice over her, O heaven! Rejoice, saints and apostles and prophets! God has judged her for the way she treated you." 2 1 Then a mighty angel picked up a boulder the size of a large millstone and threw it into the sea, and said: "With such violence the great city of Babylon will be thrown down, **never to be found again...** Rev. 19:1-5 *After this I heard what sounded like the roar of a great multitude in heaven shouting: "Hallelujah! Salvation and glory and power belong to our God, 2 for true and just are his judgments. He has condemned the great prostitute who corrupted the earth by her adulteries. He has avenged on her the blood of his servants." 3 And again they shouted: "Hallelujah! The smoke from her goes up forever and ever." 4 The twenty-four elders and the four living creatures fell down and worshiped God, who was seated on the throne. And they cried: "Amen, Hallelujah!" 5 Then a voice came from the throne, saying: "Praise our God, all you his servants, you who fear him, both small and great!"**

SONG OF RESPONSE

COMMUNION

Welcome to our celebration of the Lord's Supper. All who confess Jesus Christ as their Savior are invited to be served. If you do not profess saving faith in Jesus, we ask that you refrain from taking communion and encourage you to prayerfully consider speaking with a Pastor or Elder. To receive the bread and cup—the body and blood of Christ broken and shed for you— please come forward to the nearest table and an Elder will serve you. Elders and Deacons are available to help guide you. If you cannot come to the table, please let a Deacon or Elder know and you will be served at your seat.

Not What My Hands

Verse 1

Not what my hands have done
Can save my guilty soul
Not what my toiling flesh has done
Can make my spirit whole
Not what I feel or do
Can give me peace with God
Not all my prayers and sighs and tears
Can bear my awful load

Chorus

These guilty hands are raised
Filthy rags are all I bring
And I have come to hide
beneath your wings
These holy hands are raised
Washed in the fountain of your grace
And now I wear your righteousness

Verse 2

Thy work alone, O Christ
Can ease this weight of sin
And that alone O Lamb of God
Can give me peace within
Thy love to me, O God
Not mine O Lord to Thee
Can rid me of this dark unrest
And set my spirit free

Chorus

Bridge

We are broken we are yours
We are broken we are yours

Verse 3

Thy grace alone O God
To me can pardon speak
Thy power alone O Lamb of God
Can this sore bondage break
And no other work save Thine
No other blood will do
The strength of that which is divine
Can bear me safely through

Chorus

Tag

And now I wear your righteousness
And now these holy hands are raised
Washed in the fountain of your grace
Holy hands are raised
Washed in the fountain of your grace

Verse 4

I praise the God of Grace
I trust His truth and might
He calls me His, I call Him mine
My God, my joy, my light
My Lord has saved my life
And freely pardon gives
I love because He first loved me
I live because he lives

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DEACONS OFFERING

We who drink of Jesus' grace are called to be those who offer a cup of cold water of mercy in his name.

BENEDICTION



QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION AND DISCUSSION:

1. What had the most impact on you from our time today in God's word and worship?
2. How does the assurance of the final destruction of evil propel us into a life of courageous servanthood—working for justice, fighting oppression, and “pushing back the effects of the fall”— wherever God places us?
3. Close with a good season of prayer for one another, and also praying the Lord's Prayer... highlighting our desire for the final and full coming of the Kingdom of God!