

Let's open our bibles this evening to Revelation Chapter 18 as we continue on Wednesday night's going through his final book of the bible that brings together all that God has promised and fulfills all that God has said, and will bring to a conclusion all the God has begun to do. In the past few weeks we've come to the end of the judgments of God upon the world through these last 7 bowls of God's wrath, we read about them in Chapter 15 and 16. And Jesus' is returned to rule and to reign is imminent, in fact the Lord told John at the pouring out of the 7th bowl, the wrath of God will be finished and the mysteries of God promised by the prophets will be fulfilled. So as far as chronology goes you can go right from Chapter 16 to Chapter 19 immediately. However like so often in the scriptures and even in the Book of Acts we've seen 6 or 7 of these chapters where the Lord stops us in the chronology as far moving forward to have us look around or to teach us something about what we are seeing or what we are thinking about. And we find the same thing here because before the Lord returns, and next week we will begin Chapter 19 of the return of the Lord. God gives us these last 2 parenthetical chapters, they're parenthetical in the sense that they're in a parenthesis, they're not moving the story forward as much as they are stopping to teach us and in these 2 chapters in particular we get God's assessment of man, of his religious ways, of his political commercial ways as evidence, not only in all of history, but in particular in that last government during the great tribulation of the antichrist who will seek to be God and rule himself and man will be seen in that 7th and final world governing power to try to go it alone. And so the Lord speaks about man's religion and man's commerce or politic or his drive in life, and it is interesting he portrays it under the name of Babylon which not only was the place of false religious starts in many ways but is also that world empire that God uses constantly to speak to us about man apart from God. Man's self-centered and kind of self-dependent religion finds its zenith in the worship of the beast, man's commercial and worldly wants finds its fulfillment in this antichrist who touted a government without God, man at his best and by the time you get through Chapter 16 both of them have fallen before God. Religion fails man, commerce fails man, man's politics fail and it is interesting to me that God sees fit to point those 2 out and in what time we are.

Last year we celebrated last week Christmas and we went through Revelation 17 that the religions of man who give a nod to God but live for themselves are ones that are going fail man miserably. No matter how sincere you are, you don't know Jesus you're not going to make it for life. Because there's only 1 door not 11 doors, there's only one way not 10 paths and then we come to this week and we look at Chapter 18 which is a commentary from the Lord on man's pursuit after things, the commerce of life and here we are after Christmas watching how so often those things drive the very culture in which we live. Yet here at the end of the great tribulation those who have refused to receive the Lord, and we mentioned to you that at the end of Chapter 14 the grace of God stops, everyone who has come in will come in and now the judgment of God is just going to fall. And so here the religions of man and the commercial systems of men will suffer the loss of all things. Chapter 17 and 18 are the view near the end of the broad gate and the end of the wide road. It is a commentary for the Lord on those who love riches that have choked the word out of their lives. It is the end for those storing treasures upon the earth, it is the end of defiance and idol worship, it is the end the

ways of Cain. And so whereas last week the Lord said as the antichrist falls and his government is overthrown, here's the way the religions of man will leave you so tonight in Chapter 18 God speaks about the seductiveness and the deceptiveness of commerce, of gain of worldly gain if you will. And there's some pretty strong words here and what isn't found here is certainly found in the prophets who speak about this time and this overthrow.

Last week the religious pursuit of man was pictured by the Lord as a harlot dressed up looking for clients and finding plenty. Last week we saw how the world's religions will support and then help establish the final world empire of the antichrist and in his strength when he comes to power, especially at the middle of the great tribulation, that he will turn on the religious man and devour her according to the end of Chapter 17 there. False religion that began the day of Adam and Eve bowing their knee to inobedience to the serpent is brought to an end here. But throughout bible history amongst the religions of man are always that faithful remnant of Christ. Those faithful folks who in the midst of all of those things walked with God. In the 7 letters that Jesus wrote to the churches when we went through them in Revelation 2 and 3, 5 of them contained calls for repentance and the last day church, the Laodicean church, so nauseated the Lord that he threatened to spew them out of His mouth. And so the Lord warns us there through Paul to examine ourselves whether we are in the faith or not and it is easy to find flaws in the lives of others but can we see them in our own lives. David wrote "examine me Lord, try me, try the reigns of my heart, try my mind, try my heart" so we are continually encouraged by the Lord not to be religious people we're supposed to be in a relationship with God because religion, man, that's going to lose and so is commerce.

Tonight in Chapter 18 we are given one final kind of walk through from the Lord through John before Jesus returns to the earth and it is God's word on the ways of man ungoverned by the principles and ungoverned by the heart of God and so you find these are the Lord's statements about man at his best without Him. The pursuit of gain, the ways of commerce symbolized again by Babylon, that worldly example of man seeking life and satisfaction apart from the Lord. Unlike the religious system which we looked at last week, which is stopped at some point and forced to see what it has given rise to in the support of the antichrist, the commercial system will in one form or another last until the very last day and the shock will be "oh my goodness it's all gone in a moment's time" and the catch phrase is "in one hour". In just an hour all that we've planned all that we've hoped for, all that we've saved for, all that we've longed for, is absolutely destroyed. And as man's religion was epitomized by the rule of this last beast, so this hot pursuit of the things that you can own and have find man driven until the last minute until the judgment day seeking to gain those things for himself.

What interests me as I read through these and they're very short chapters, I mean by comparison to what the Lord might have said, but what you don't find written here you'll find written in the prophets and much of what we learn about these days, especially from the time of the Lord's return forward we find in the writings of the prophets and in the words of Jesus, especially in the words regarding the last days. For example when

it comes to brevity in Chapter 19 the Lord covers the 1000 year reign, his 1000 year reign, the millennial reign of Christ in 6 verses. Now I know that the Lord had more to say if He wanted because a 1000 years and 6 days seems pretty quick but you can find in 6 verses pretty quick, but you can find thousands of verses in the prophets about those days and so John does give us even beginning in Chapter 17 very bare bones kind of outlines, the things the Lord wants us to know in the way that we're heading and understanding what's coming on, but in 6 verses honestly we cover a 1000 years and so the Lord's comments tend to be brief but very direct and we would do well, especially as you study the prophets, especially the prophets, that you study them with a pad of paper and a pen and you begin as you read you can tell what took place in a historical setting and what is that prophetic part that has yet to be fulfilled and when will it and does this now give us more information about the days of the Lord's return and the judgment of the nations and the 1000 year reign and all. And we'll look at those in detail in the next few weeks as well.

But tonight here's the Lord's thinking about man's commercial ways and what do you think the Lord's opinion is about man's pursuit of things. Without reading ahead or without really having a necessarily a verse to quote, do you think the Lord is proud of the way we handle our commerce? Or do you think He would do things differently if He was in charge. What priority would that get in our lives? And what kind of priority does He see in the lives of those in the world even if they're religious folks who don't know Him and what's going to come crashing down. If you tonight know the Lord then everything you have you know is going to burn and everything you have been given at best you can use it for God's glory and store treasures in heaven, you know you can't hang on to things too tightly you know that. But imagine if that's your life and your hope and all that you care about. What will that do to you when the markets fall and the euro goes flat against the dollar and banks go upside down and governments spend more than they make what happens to you. Oh man you stay awake nights. I go to sleep at night because Jesus is my Lord and I'm not tied into that stuff. Will we suffer, yeah, we may but I'm not going to suffer for eternity, I'm going to heaven and so are you so your touch with the world is far different than the world's love for it, if you will. We have it as a temptation they have it as a life.

Verse 1 says this "after these things" John said "I saw another angel coming down from heaven who had great authority and the earth was illuminated with His glory." So here's a guy delegated by the Lord, an angel with power and great authority to do a work in his name. He might very well be the stone thrower that we'll read about in verse 21 but he comes in the glory of God, he's like the apostles who were in Jesus' presence and you could just take note of them, they'd been with Jesus. Well here comes an angel illuminated with the glory of the Lord "and he cries mightily, this angel with a loud voice crying Babylon the great is fallen, is fallen and has become a dwelling place of demons, a prison for every foul spirit, a cage for every unclean and hated bird." The word "fallen" in Greek there is in what is known as the **aurous** tense, which is an interesting tense that the Lord uses a lot to prove that he is God. An **aurous** tense is something that is spoken of as a completed action though it still has to happen. We might say to someone "hey can I count on you?" and you can go "you can count on me or you can

count on it, put it in the bank, I'm there." And we say it like we're going to be there, we want it to be certain. The Lord uses the **aurous** tense for that - He speaks of things in a lot of places but even though it hasn't taken place it is so certain that it will that the Lord says it's as if it has already taken place. That's how He writes of Babylon and the repetition of the word fallen, like every Greek practice, we put exclamation points behind sentences, Greeks repeat themselves, so do the Hebrews. The more it's repeated the greater the emphasis if you will, so here's the emphasis on the "falling" of this what will be told is the Babylonian outlook commercially or politically that was represented in the Babylon's way of life. As a world empire Babylon ran its political and its commercial life with the demons of hell. They were absolutely developed as a life of total excess, no shame, no control, you just have to go back and read the old Babylonian Empire. The system of commerce that today finds itself in every culture whether it's rich or poor around the globe is the one that the Lord will one day bring to its knees. And all of the places, of all of the places that the fallen angels could gather the Lord finds them here. The devil lives here in the attitude and in the outlook, if you will, of these who are seeking to gain for themselves. The Lord even uses the words "hateful bird" which is a simile that at least in the parables Jesus uses a lot to speak of those things that are not of God, that may very well look religious in an outward form, but it speaks of the evil of the enemy behind the scenes. And the Lord says of life on the planet, if you will, once these judgments have fallen, that Babylon's method of commerce and gain where the enemy did its greatest work is now no more. And it will be absolutely destroyed.

It might be of interest to you to read some of the business publications that you can get ahold of even on line these days and the continual use of eastern mysticism among upper level management groups to try to get the edge on performance and productivity out of the staff. Phenomenal! The things that they are teaching that border on the spiritism so that they can inspire rather than just allowing men to serve God, that's not what they're interested in, they're interested in you producing and gaining and tying it into eastern mysticism. Ancient Babylon, which was a city first and then it was an empire, was in full bloom in the 6th century BC when the Lord spoke to her about her future being desolate. You can read Isaiah Chapter 13 and 14 or Jeremiah Chapter 50 and 51 which are 4 chapters which talk about her imminent demise in a long term sense, her imminent overthrow by the God of the universe. So the Lord has had His eye on man's ways for a long time. We live in the midst of that as well. We read in verse 3 that "all of the nations have drunk of the wine of the wrath of her (Babylon's) fornication. The kings of the earth have committed fornication with her, the merchants of the earth have become rich through the abundance of her luxury." So like the religious influence from last week here the influence or the infection of gain has spread to all nations and leaders and people, it has polluted the earth. The fornication here is with the flesh and the "wants" and the "gotta haves" and the merchants who have become rich as man has become enslaved to fulfilling those wants. Her luxuries alluring man, the enemy using it against man to lead him astray all under the captivity of the flesh "this is what I've gotta have this is what I want." There are probably few people alive on the planet that know that as well as western culture folks who live in the western hemisphere who have it so good even in the midst of things that seem to be so bad. Religion in Chapter 17 intoxicated the people. This desire of the flesh for riches and pleasure and money and power and

success have caught the ambition of kings and determined their actions solely by profit and gain. You think about what's happening in Syria tonight and a mad man slaughtering people for the sake of power and you see the enemy at work. Now whether we do something about it or not we tend to do things only when it's to our benefit. But people are dying in the streets and it goes on without almost challenge.

Paul when he wrote to Timothy said that the time would come in the end when man wouldn't endure sound doctrine anymore but they would heap according to their own desires to themselves teachers having itching ears and not wanting to hear the truth they will listen to fables. They will listen to stories that scratch where they itch that will fit into their lifestyle or their way of life. James when he wrote his short little epistle there in the back of your bible started in Chapter 4 by saying "where do you think wars and fighting come from among you, do they not come from your desire for pleasure that war in your members. You lust, you do not have, you murder, you covet you cannot obtain and so you fight and you war." You fight and you war. "You do not have because you do not ask, you do not receive because you ask amiss, you only want to spend it on your pleasure." That's the life of man apart from a relationship with God that the enemy has perpetrated for generations upon the world and it will be destroyed in the day that Jesus returns and sets up His kingdom, quite different than what we see around the world. And we have to heed the warnings of the Holy Spirit to the church he said in John's letter there in the back of your bible "don't love the world or the things that are of the world because if you love the world then the love of the Father is not in you and all that is in the world, the lust of your flesh, the lust of your eyes, the pride of life it's not with the father that's a worldly concern and the world is passing away and the lust thereof. But if you do the will of God you'll abide forever."

So here at the end of man's rebellion when God will soon send his Son through the clouds and establish His kingdom upon the earth and you will rule and reign with Him, don't expect to see the commercial system you see today. There's plenty of things that the bible tells us will be taking place during that thousand year reign that is very productive and business-like but the whole attitude of man towards commerce and development is very different than we have it today. Be careful of the worldly binding allurements because look, in the end, they're going to be taken out.

Verse 4 says "and I heard another voice from heaven saying 'come out of her my people lest you share in her sins, lest you receive her plagues for her sins have reached to heaven and God has remembered her iniquities'". Now no doubt it is specific to those who are living upon the earth at the time and very specific to the remnant of Jewish saints that the Lord has hidden in Petra where God has called them forth, yet this call from the Lord to separate yourself from the world and it's ways you'll find in literally every generation in the scriptures. In Jeremiah 51 the Lord speaks about coming out from Babylon "my people get out of the midst of her let everyone deliver himself from the fierce anger of the Lord. How Babylon has become desolate among the nations. Run hide." And something to that effect you will find time and again as the Lord speaks to us. To Abraham the Lord said what in Chapter 12 of Genesis? "Get out of your country, leave your family get away from your father's house to a land that I will

show you I'll make you a great nation." The angel comes to Lot sitting in the mess of Sodom and he says to him "arise take your wife your 2 daughters lest you be consumed in the punishment of this city" and Lot lingered. Lot is so tied into the worldly ways of life. The men took hold of his hand, the hand of his daughter, his wife's hand and then it says "the Lord being merciful to him He brought him outside of the city and when he got outside he said 'no escape for your life, don't look behind you, don't stay in the plain, run to the mountains lest you be destroyed, get out from among them.'" So the Lord says to the church. Paul writes to the Corinthians "don't be unequally yoked together with unbelievers, what fellowship does righteousness have with lawlessness? What communion does light have with darkness." Get out – well in the end it's the worldly way that is destroyed, the way of God's people is fine there's real life to be found there. The challenge is do you believe that, that the Lord is correct when he tells us that he wants to protect us from the binding influences of the lusts and all that you find not only in our flesh but in the world, in the culture, in the society in which we live.

From a historic standpoint, Israel is an interesting lesson because before her captivity to Babylon in 606 BC Israel was an agrarian society. They were farmers, they raised cattle and herds and sheep they lived off the land and that was pretty much their driving concern. In the 70 years that they spent in Babylon in captivity when the Lord allowed them to return, only 50,000 went back to that hard, harsh wilderness life that was what Jerusalem had become. Most were absolutely enamored by the commerce and the technology that they found themselves in and amongst in Babylon that they when given the chance to go back did not. The U.S. in many ways follows the same path. We were a very agrarian society, became an industrial society, now are a technological one. Yet if you go back and look at the numbers or just at the way income was in the days that we were primarily an agrarian society, children were very much valued by agrarian families because they provided what was estimated as an extra \$25,000 a year in income to a family because of their work ethic and their ability to work and big families is what you saw and happy ones at that because they worked together, the land to make ends meet. In today's society children are not usually seen as an asset but as a liability, at least when it comes to a financial estimate. If you send your kids to public school it is estimated it's going to cost you \$150,000 to \$160,000 to get them through if he attends a public school and because of the commercial desires that man has, we've moved away from agrarian societies, we see smaller families, legalized abortion, the bondage to get ahead at all cost. Babylon becomes alive and well, the culture dominates the heart of man, whereas the saints they where God lives they don't hang onto that stuff, they're delivered hopefully from it. Further moves towards commercialism today continue to poison I think the family both partners now usually work, I think 81% of families in America both husband and wife now work. Which means that for the most part families are raised by others for the sake of gain and the excuse you use is "well we just want the best for our kids" but let me just say to you this, the best for your kids you can't buy. You can be the best for your kids but you can't buy that. And so we head towards this final judgment.

Interestingly enough when our nation was agrarian there was no mention at all or any need for psychologists. Somehow the extended family of unity and love and support

raised up mature and mentally healthy kids, kids knew they were needed, kids knew they were wanted, kids played an important part in the family and the family grew. In industrialized or technological societies people tend to be isolated, they'll be on the computer by themselves, they'll watch videos by themselves, they'll put their headsets on by themselves and we find ourselves we lose the hard working kind of satisfied way of life that was life so many years ago and kids don't know that they're needed. I read an interesting article a couple of weeks ago that I thought was very interesting. It was an expose on the life of the people in New Guinea, which by the way is a very agrarian society to this day. And some things that the writer said I thought were very interesting he said "we work all year to get 2 weeks off to do what?" And he says many people just like to go fishing. If you lived in New Guinea you could fish every day. Or we look forward to a long weekend to have a barbecue. They cook outside every day. We want to go live under the stars, camp out away from the ratrace, they do it every night except not in \$250,000 motorhomes.

The commercial system and the lusts of men continue through sin to exploit the hearts of men with false values which is why Paul when he wrote to the Philippians said "look not that I speak in regard to want, I've learned in whatever state I am to be content" so Paul taught that contentment has nothing to do with what you have or do not have, but rather who you know and who you depend upon. Having food and clothing he said to Timothy you should be content. For example what really is a diamond worth. What is it really worth. And how much of the diamond industry is just hidden in some vault because to flood the market devalues the value and we want it to be as high as possible. What if the latest rage was wearing granite? Not diamonds. Artificial valuing based on societal expectations is Babylon at its finest. Those things change, God's Word does not and the values it develops stay constant to every generation – the love of God and faith and obedience of His people. The bible tells us that in the days when the church will be removed in order to buy a loaf of bread you're going to have to have a bag of gold, that shows you the value and how it changes. There has been and will always be real value in clothing and food. But everything else can go up in smoke.

So "I heard a voice saying 'come out of her my people lest you share in her sins, lest you receive her plagues, her sins have reached to heaven and God has remembered her iniquities'". For centuries God has allowed these things to continue but judgment is inescapable and here it comes to bear and God will eradicate the system that has eradicated millions of lives. The Lord said there in Jeremiah "we would have healed Babylon but she has not healed so forsake her and let her go to her own country for her judgment has reached the heavens and has lifted up to the skies." God uses that example for us here.

Verse 6 "render to her just as she rendered to you, repay her double according to her works in the cup which she has mixed, mix it double for her and in the measure that she glorified herself and lived luxuriously in the same measure, give her now torment and sorrow for she says in her heart 'I sit as queen, I am no widow, I will not see sorrow' therefore her plagues will come in one day – death, mourning famine, she will be utterly burned with fire for strong is the Lord God who judges her." Now in keeping with the

enormity of this sinful way of life, a voice from heaven cries out for God to give her twice what she is owed. Give her, Babylon, the system twice what she is owed. There is now no mercy and notice that payday is coming. The fact that God waits to judge should never be misread as approval. Notice in verse 7 the declaration of those who live in her glorious luxury and they feel very smug about an endless supply. The ability to buy and gather own and surround herself. Sounds a lot like that Laodicean church doesn't it? Where the Lord said there to her "you say you're rich and wealthy have need of nothing. You don't know, you're wretched, and miserable poor blind and naked, you better come to me I'll give you some clothes you can wear and I can counsel you to buy some gold refined in the fire then you can truly be rich." False sense of security. But now notice comes torment and sorrow and immediate loss. In a matter of moments here's what Isaiah wrote about this time in 700 BC "Therefore hear this now you who are given to pleasure and dwell securely and say in your heart 'I am and there's none else beside me I shall not sit as a widow'" exactly what is quote here "nor shall I know the loss of children these 2 things shall come to you in a moment in one day the loss of your children and your widowhood they shall come upon you in your fullness because of the multitude of your sorceries for the great abundance of your enchantments you've trusted in wickedness, you've said in your heart no one sees me, your wisdom and your knowledge have warped you, you've said in your heart I am and there's none beside me, therefore evil will become upon you, you shall not know from where it comes, trouble will come you will not be able to put it off, desolation will come suddenly which you yourself shall never know."

So here if verse 8 the plagues will come in one day and the Lord mentions it several times here in this chapter that the surprise for the commercial folks are going to be that everything's fine, I can handle it and in one moment, even at the very end here of the great tribulation, they will be shocked to find everything that they hoped to gain and keep will be lost. Now you might remember from Daniel Chapter 5 that Babylon thought that she was absolutely not vulnerable as a world power. On the night that the Assyrians were rising up or sorry the Medo-Persians I should say, were rising up, the Babylonians were sitting inside Babylon with its huge walls and gates drinking and having a party while they laughed at the people outside – you'll never get in here. But if you read Daniel Chapter 5 you know that in one day, in one hour, the world power went from absolute authority to none at all and the Medo-Persians without almost a shot being fired took over the entire world's governing ability in a matter of days. So what happened to Babylon in a physical sense is yet to take place to those who in a spiritual sense lived that kind of life, who hold to the world that what they have will last forever. No it's not going to last. You want to make good investments, make eternal ones.

Well here's the reaction then of some of the kings and the merchants and the traders whose life is now affected by what takes place. Verse 9 "the kings of the earth who committed fornication and lived luxuriously with her will weep and lament for her when they see the smoke of her burning. Standing at a distance for fear of her torment they will say 'alas, alas'" the repetition again "that great city Babylon, that mighty city, in one hour your judgment has come." So here's the lamenting of the world leaders weeping if you will over their loss with an earthquake, by the way Chapter 16 the really big one and

a hundred pounds of hail or hundred pound hail falling I don't think your stuff's going to last too well. I know you got a cover on the boat, probably not going to help it it's going to go.

Verse 11 "and the merchants of the earth will weep and mourn over her for no one buys their merchandise anymore. Merchandise that was of gold and silver and precious stones and pearls, fine linen and purple silk and scarlet, every kind of citron wood every kind of object of ivory, every kind of object of the most precious wood and bronze and iron and marble and cinnamon and incense and fragrant oils and frankincense and wine and oil and fine flour and wheat, cattle and sheep, horses and chariots, and even the bodies and the souls of men. The fruit", now here's the key verse, "that your soul longed for has gone from you and all of the things which are rich and splendid have gone from you and you shall find them no more at all." Everything that your life has craved you're going to lose. The splendid things, the glorious things, the desirable things, no matter whether its livestock or jewelry or textiles or slavery, the selling of bodies and souls. It is going to absolutely be taken in an hour and the verses surrounding this key verse give us a partial but more detailed list of the things that they are mourning over. Notice verse 15 "the merchants of these things who have become rich by her will stand at a distance for fear of her torment weeping and wailing saying 'alas alas the great city that was clothed in fine linen and purple and scarlet and adorned with gold and precious stones and pearls' in one hour, such great riches have come to nothing. Every ship master, all who travel by ships and sailors and as many as trade on the sea they stood at a distance crying when they saw the smoke of her burning saying 'what is like this great city.'" So the merchants, the business owners the sellers the kings they weep their loss. The list there in verse 12, in verse 13, in verse 16 no more profits. The gold, the fancy wood, the finest clothing, the expensive spices, even the owning and selling of man, material goods for material gain in a moments time come to a crashing halt.

And today the lust for things that monopolizes advertisers who target groups and work hard at creating need will be done. I think I told you my little granddaughter she had a certain doll that she had to have and I still can't figure out where she figured out she had to have that particular doll, she's all of about 5. But she said everybody at school has one and then I said "how did they all get one" and she says "well it's on TV" and I think they advertise to the kids and pretty soon you create a need and then everybody wants one. It doesn't just happen to kids, adults do the same thing. You know you do. But that's the battle we face. Nobody wants a cabbage patch doll anymore, but those were real big a few years ago. You know what I was thinking about today, I heard a guy talking about it, when you were kids and I grew up in the late 60's, do any of you guys remember having that football game where you turn on the thing and it'd vibrate and the little things would move. That was my favorite game right there. Now I bought my little granddaughter a monopoly game that has a credit card you just swipe it and you get credit you don't even have to change money, that was pretty good. I don't think it stops. Kids are lured to cereals and toys and tennis shoes and the rave of the day and now you need an iPad an iPod and a PS3 and a Wii, and whatever they are you just gotta have those now. I suspect a lot of you bought those this last week. When I was a kid in

high school I wanted those Jack Purcell tennis shoes, they were like great but they were \$5.99 and my father said over his dead body we're spending \$6 for tennis shoes, that's all I remember him saying. They still have them, I can buy them now, they're \$75 I think but when you grow up the things you want change. And maybe some of you are here tonight terribly in debt because of that very spirit of wanting and having, it's the enemy that does that, it's not the Lord. "Oh Lord give me what I need." I'm sure the Lord's yelling from heaven "define 'need' define 'need'". The rest is created in the "I want" department. Commercialism is not from God in that sense, it comes from Babylon it will be destroyed, but it destroys people's lives who have this worldly gain mindset at heart. I can't begin to tell you how many counseling families we've visited with who end up in divorce because the husband has to work 16 hours a day or be gone 20 days out of 30 days for his job. "I don't know what's wrong." Really? Live with a little less, "well we have to have a house", "no you don't get an apartment love your wife, then we'll worry about the rest."

So there in Luke Chapter 12 when somebody said to Jesus in the crowd "tell my brother to divide his inheritance with me." Jesus looked at him and said "Man" and I love it because it says "man" so I know the 60's were cool, "man who made me a judge or an arbitrator over you, you take heed and you beware of the covetousness because your life doesn't consist of the abundance of the things that you possess." And then He told him that parable of the guy who kept getting richer and how to keep building bigger barns and He said the guy finally said "one more barn and I'm going to sit back and enjoy my life", and the Lord said "you're a fool you're going to die tonight." And then who gets all of the things that you've labored for and then He makes a spiritual application He says "so is everyone who will lay up treasure for himself and not be rich towards God. It's a big battle the people of God fight with, with the world and its ways. We try to bring them together as one but they're diametrically opposed in that sense of commercialism and its lust. Jesus is coming to destroy the destroyer of men, it'll be over in an hour. Look we're not going to reverse the trend but God's going to put an end to it one day and the government of the antichrist will epitomize these lusts.

Notice in verse 17 and 18 and 19, did we read down I don't think we read that far. Verse 19 says "they throw dust on their heads and they cry out weeping and wailing and saying 'alas alas the great city in which all who had ships on the sea became rich by her wealth in one hour is made desolate'". So the trader, the supplier they all have the same sentiment "my life is over. We've lost all." You might want to go read Ezekiel Chapter 27 and 28 which is the story of the Lord's dealing with the throne of Tyre, but the City of Tyre and how in Chapter 28 in the first 10 verses especially, they started saying "oh you know our riches are gone, our hearts been lifted up by wisdom, we've traded, we've increased our riches, we've taken advantage of people, we've lost many things but we're getting wealthier by the moment." And the Lord says "man you're going to be destroyed, you're going to lose everything" and then in verse 11 he stops and he goes to talk to Satan the one sitting behind the king. And it is there that you'll find the representation in Ezekiel 28 of the fall of the enemy from grace and who he once was and his influence on the king of Tyre who drove the nation, the people to gain even at the cost of life.

Verse 20 says “rejoice over her, oh heaven and you holy apostles and prophets, God has avenged you of her and a mighty angel took up a stone like a great millstone and threw it into the sea saying ‘thus with violence the great city of Babylon will be thrown down and not be found anymore’ and the sound of their harpist and musicians and flutists and the trumpeters shall not be heard in you anymore. No craftsman of any craft shall be found in you, the sound of a millstone shall not be heard in you anymore. And the light of the lamp shall not shine in you anymore and the voice of bridegroom or the bride shall not be heard in you anymore for your merchants were the great men of the earth. By your sorcery all of the nations have been deceived and in you was found the blood of the prophets and the saints and all who were slain upon the earth.” So the very system that has stood in the way of many coming to the Lord is now brought down for good. And notice a call goes out to those who had sought to reach men with good news that they can now rejoice because heaven is going to overcome. In fact the first 2 verses of Chapter 19 talk about the singing in heaven at the fall of the worlds and the world and its ways. But notice verse 14, verse 22, verse 23, not going to come back, this is it, this is the final straw and the days when the merchants were admired for their business savvy will be no more. In fact these businessmen were very much involved in the slaughter of the prophets and the saints and anyone who would have a spiritual interest in the lives of its people.

Pretty heavy, right, but something to think about. I would encourage you when you read through the prophets especially, write down some of the things that the Lord gives to you about the last days because we’re going to have to continually set before you especially these last few chapters the prophets words about this time. Next week we would like to spend 1000 years on the 1000 year reign but we only have 6 verses, so we’re going to look at the 6 verses, the return of Jesus. May I encourage you that as a Christian you shouldn’t be so caught in the world that it becomes your life. I know you have needs and I know you have things to care for and I know that you want your family to do well and all those things are admirable for sure, but the enemy uses it to get your soul and this isn’t our home right? We’re leaving this place, hopefully by the end of the year but I don’t know. If not we’ll build a parking structure.