

Series	Gamma 16 – Study 15
Reference	Revelations 17-18
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Good evening brothers and sisters in Christ. Welcome back to Gamma. We're looking at the, almost the last one third of the Book of Revelations. It has taken us some time. Today we will be looking at two chapters, chapter 17 and 18 in this Study 15. Let's start with a word of prayer. Lord we ask that you be with us this evening. Help us understand these two large chapters and we ask that your spirit speak into our lives. We ask for Jesus' sake. Amen.

Now we've been looking at the final judgments on mankind. If you remember the seals in the Revelations 6, final judgment. Then the final judgment on the seventh trumpet in Revelations 11, then there's a great harvest Revelations 14. And then you've got the seven bowls, which is 15 and 16, and then you've got the battle of Armageddon. So the judgements are ramping up as it were. So here's the structure.

We've got the seven bowls of judgment, which is looking at the demise of unbelieving mankind up to chapter 16. 17, 18, 19 and 20 is the demise or the judgements of the forces of evil. So mankind is judged first, and then you've got the demise of the evil forces, demise of the harlot or Babylon, demise of beast and the prophet and lastly of the dragon.

So today we're going to focus on the prostitute or the harlot, and there are four points basically:

1. We are going to look at the characteristics of the prostitute
2. The fate of the prostitute.
3. Judgment of the prostitute.
4. A challenge for us to forsake the prostitute.

Characteristics of This Prostitute:

1 Then one of the seven angels who had the seven bowls came and said to me, "Come, I will show you the judgment of the great prostitute who is seated on many waters,

What is this prostitute sitting on many waters?

If you look forward to verse 15.

15 And the angel said to me, "The waters that you saw, where the prostitute is seated, are peoples and multitudes and nations and languages.

So therefore this is a prostitute and she is sitting on many waters, which means she is supported by all the people in the world who are basically non-believers.

2 with whom the kings of the earth have committed sexual immorality, and with the wine of whose sexual immorality the dwellers on earth have become drunk."

So here we have sexually morality is a metaphor for idolatry. So, she is the person who actually leads

Kings and the people of the world into worship of false gods. She is supported by the beast.

3 And he carried me away in the Spirit into a wilderness, and I saw a woman sitting on a scarlet beast that was full of blasphemous names, and it had seven heads and ten horns.

This is the beast. So she is actually in cahoots with the beast. Then there's a duality about her.

4 The woman was arrayed in purple and scarlet, and adorned with gold and jewels and pearls, holding in her hand a golden cup full of abominations and the impurities of her sexual immorality.

So she has a duality. If you look at her on outwardly she's splendidly beautifully arrayed in purple, scarlet and gold jewels and pearls on the other hand the reality is what she gives you is a cup full of abominations and impurities of her sexual immorality. And this is in line with the structure of Revelations. You've got duality that cuts right across the Book of Revelations. You are either of the seal of God or the Mark of the Beast. You either are the saints whose names are written in the book of life or you are earth dwellers, whose names are not written in the book of life. You've got the harlot or the bride. Now there's a comparison here because if you look at Revelation 17:1

One of the seven angels who had the seven bowls came and said to me, "Come, I will show you the judgment of the great harlot.

If you look at Revelation 21:9, the same structure of the sentence is there.

Then came one of the seven angels who had the seven bowls full of the seven last plagues spoke to me.

It's the same. All right. So what he's doing is he is comparing the harlot or the prostitute together with the bride. And the harlot is the one that relies on the beast, relies on the people of the world, the bride is the one who relies on heaven or God himself. And so you have the harlot and she plays the role as a fantastic symbol because outside she is seductive adorn with purple scarlet and gold, everything is beautiful but inside she is deadly. I want to look back to Proverbs. Proverbs give us much wisdom. It says,

With much seductive speech (this is the harlot) she persuades him; with her smooth talk she compels him. 22 All at once he follows her, as an ox goes to the slaughter, or as a stag is caught fast 23 till an arrow pierces its liver; as a bird rushes into a snare; he does not know that it will cost him his life.

So that's how dangerous a harlot is from the book of Proverbs. And so she is also someone who persecutes the saints. Now she is also Babylon,

5 And on her forehead was written a name of mystery: "Babylon the great, mother of prostitutes and of earth's abominations." 6 And I saw the woman, drunk with the blood of the saints, the blood of the martyrs of Jesus.

So she is also Babylon. Now here you actually have Babylon the Great. Babylon is referred to because it was a greatest city in ancient times, one of the seven wonders of the world at that time. And here you have a comparison between this Babylon, which is arrayed in purple and scarlet and the New Jerusalem in Revelations 21 you read later on, the walls made of Jasper, which is like diamond. The city is pure gold, foundations are beautiful, precious stones and the gates are made of pearls. And so you have a metaphor here, a mixed metaphor. You got a metaphor of the prostitute who is also Babylon. And this is just like Revelations. It is a book where you've got mixed metaphor where the lion is also the lamb.

Here we have the harlot who is also the Babylon as well. But at that time when John wrote this, Babylon is in ruins. It's actually a backward desert, village where God have really judged her before the past. What was in front of John is actually the Roman Empire with its vast reach all over the world, and the city is actually of great note, it is actually Rome itself with its great splendor and power and majesty.

So therefore Babylon becomes a symbol and for John, he would have been thinking of Rome and this is for us, the symbol represents one of our mega cities, a city of man. And what is the prostitute? The prostitute is therefore the world's system of economy, corruption and idolatry based on man not on God, the city of man rather than the city of God. And this will come down because in Revelation 14:8,

Another angle, a second, followed, saying, "Fallen, fallen is Babylon the great, she who made all nations drink the wine of the passion of her sexual immorality."

So therefore the world's system of economy and corruption and idolatry has actually corrupted the people of the world into idolatry. Now we look into any mega city, it is beautiful on the outside. Beautiful, glitzy and the women with jewelry, but on the inside the cost like blood diamonds, how you to get them through the oppression of poor slaves working in Africa. On outside it is a glamorous. How do we get that? Sweatshops where there's pain and child labor. We've seen all that. There's an underbelly of society, which is beautiful on the outside, but ugly on the inside.

Almost 20% of city dwellers, actually, even in United States, dwell in poverty, in a beautiful city compared to 7.5% in suburbs. There are two faces of our Kuala Lumpur. On one side the beautiful, the advance. On the other side, the labor, who produce all this beauty.

So therefore we have got the false prophet, the beast and the prostitute, and all three have a different mode of operation. The false prophet works through deception. The beast works through power and the woman, the prostitute works true attraction. Three ways in which we are bombarded by the lure of temptation.

Now let's look at the fate of the prostitute.

6...When I saw her, I marveled greatly. 7 But the angel said to me, "Why do you marvel? I will tell you the mystery of the woman, and of the beast with seven heads and ten horns that carries her.

Now Revelations 13 talks about this beast. One of the heads seem to have a mortal wound, disastrous wound that will kill you, but it's mortal but it was healed, which is a contradiction in terms. All right. And you remember, this piece is a parody of the Trinity, all right. Parody, against Jesus who was killed on the cross and rose again.

8 The beast that you saw was, and is not, and is about to rise from the bottomless pit and go to destruction. And the dwellers on earth whose names have not been written in the book of life from the foundation of the world will marvel to see the beast, because it was and is not and is to come.

So basically are taken up by this miraculous nature of the beast that keeps coming back as it were. The description of this beast.

9 This calls for a mind with wisdom: the seven heads are seven mountains on which the woman is seated; 10 they are also seven kings, five of whom have fallen, one is, the other has not yet come, and when he does come he must remain only a little while. 11 As for the beast that was and is not, it is an eighth but it belongs to the seven, and it goes to destruction. 12 And the ten horns that you saw are ten

kings who have not yet received royal power, but they are to receive authority as kings for one hour, together with the beast.

Now these are either kings or kingdoms that are going to come and they're going to hold power and oppress the people of God. But remember for a short time, who are they? How do you work out who the 10 Kings and all that? It's too difficult because it's a historical document, we don't know. Some people say it's the whole lineage of Roman Kings and emperors, but there are various theories going around. I don't think there's any point of us going to exactly who these kings are. I think it could be kingdoms, we will not know. However, we need to understand that this piece, whatever they were, whether it was 10 Kings or whatever, actually defeated by the lamb. Verse 13 and 14. That's the important message.

13 These are of one mind, and they hand over their power and authority to the beast. 14 They will make war on the Lamb, and the Lamb will conquer them, for he is Lord of lords and King of kings, and those with him are called and chosen and faithful.”

The beast will be defeated by the lamb. And we look paradoxically, the beast and the people actually turn on the prostitute and they fight among themselves.

16 And the ten horns that you saw, they and the beast will hate the prostitute. They will make her desolate and naked and devour her flesh and burn her up with fire,

So you have evil turning on. If you look in history, doesn't this happen? Hitler during World War Two and Stalin from Russia actually has secret pathway actually emboldened Hitler to actually attack Poland and start World War Two but later on they fell apart. They had their differences and they turned on each other and Stalin actually attacked Hitler in the end. Look at our own politics. Three of these people were in the same party before. And where are they now? They turn on each other. And why does this actually happen?

17 for God has put it into their hearts to carry out his purpose by being of one mind and handing over their royal power to the beast, until the words of God are fulfilled.

The reason for the betrayal, why enemies turn on each other aside from their own selfish ambitions is the fact that God puts it into their heart. So therefore, what John is saying evil will turn in on itself and it will achieve the purposes of God and this is important thing to understand when you are being persecuted, when you live in a country where the leaders are killing each other, betraying each other, and there is so much political intrigue and turmoil, but in the end whatever happens with power God is always behind that.

So here we have the fate of the prostitute. Irresistible, attractive, but inevitably will be destroyed.

Judgment of The Prostitute:

We can take from actually chapter 18, whole of chapter 18. I don't have time to go through every verse. So I'd like you to go back and actually go through the verses. It's like a poem. It's like a funeral dirge. You go to the Chinese funeral, there is a guy there singing, right? He is singing about or lamenting the person who has actually died. So here we have a lament of Babylon and let's look at the lament. The lament is a judgment on the demonic nature of Babylon. Babylon for all his beauty outside and attraction, which we are all immersed in actually demonic.

2...“Fallen, fallen is Babylon the great!
She has become a dwelling place for demons,
a haunt for every unclean spirit,
a haunt for every unclean bird,
a haunt for every unclean and detestable beast.

Judgment on this idolatry

3 For all nations have drunk
the wine of the passion of her sexual immorality,
and the kings of the earth have committed immorality with her,
and the merchants of the earth have grown rich from the power of her luxurious living.”

And judgment for her sins and pride

7As she glorified herself and lived in luxury,
...since in her heart she says,
'I sit as a queen,
I am no widow,
and mourning I shall never see.'

Therefore she is judged on her pride and the world laments. Royalty, business man and shipping merchants, and they are all lamenting because they used to trade in gold, silver and pearls. And yet on the other side, they also trade in slaves. That is human souls, the ugly nature of their trade. And they last for the great city where all the ships at sea grew rich by their wealth in a single hour, she was laid to waste. And this happens at a single hour. Remember the financial crisis of 2008. In a single hour, the largest companies in the world went under. So this is not inconceivable.

And then later on in the last part of the funeral song, angels will sing of the utter devastation of the harlot or the prostitute.

- There will be no record of her.
- There will be no rejoicing of her.
- There will be no rebuilding of her.
- There'll be no reflection of her.
- There'll be no recovery for her.
- There'll be no respect for her
- There'll be no redemption.

Utter devastation of the prostitute. How do you apply today's study?

Well, the application actually in this verse four,

4 Then I heard another voice from heaven saying,
“Come out of her, my people,
lest you take part in her sins,
lest you share in her plagues;

That's the warning to us that we are to come out of Babylon where we live or our mega cities in that sense. But if you had to take that into context of what John has written in the gospels and in the letters, he is not asking you to run away from KL and go back to Seremban. All right. John 17 says,

14 I have given them your word, and the world has hated them because they are not of the world, just as I am not of the world. 15 I do not ask that you take them out of the world, but that you keep them from the evil one. 16 They are not of the world, just as I am not of the world. 17 Sanctify them in the truth; your word is truth. 18 As you sent me into the world, so I have sent them into the world.

So Jesus is not asking you to come out, but he says, he has given you the word and this word will keep you from the evil one and this word will set you apart and make you different. I-John 2:15 to 17 says

15 Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. 16 For all that is in the world—the desires of the flesh and the desires of the eyes and pride of life—is not from the Father but is from the world. 17 And the world is passing away along with its desires, but whoever does the will of God abides forever.

The prostitute has a funeral song, it is passing away, but whoever does the will of God abides forever. So therefore we are not to be seduced by the prostitute who represents wealth, power, beauty, desire, status, all the things that we are enmeshed and mesmerized with and this is dangerous. The beast works by power, the harlot or the prostitute works by attraction. We're seduced by wealth today. People are all in this rat race. We love things. Why? Because it brings security, happiness, contentment, meaning and value. We are attracted to what is in the city. We want to become part of what is beautiful. And our investment is our performance, our persistence, our productivity, our promotion, our pay or our works. That's what we are actually investing our lives into. But the cost is health breakdown, mental deterioration, family disruption, at risk behavior when we want more than what we actually deserve, loss of empathy where we no longer feel because people become tools for us to use in order to achieve our goals.

Look at the suicide rates all over the world. The highest in Western countries. Look at Korea, Japan, even Singapore has twice the suicide rates of Malaysia right down here. The more advanced you are, it seems as if the more unhappy people are. We need to love people and use things rather than to love things and use people. And you can look in the funeral song of the prostitute. The relationship of all the businessmen, the Kings is basically transactional in their relationship. They don't really love you. The people are crying and lamenting in a funeral song because they've lost something of themselves. They don't actually love the prostitute. Look at verse 9

9 And the kings of the earth, who committed sexual immorality and lived in luxury with her, will weep and wail over her when they see the smoke of her burning.

They are not weeping over the fact that they loved her. They are weeping because they lost a source of luxury and look at the merchants.

11 And the merchants of the earth weep and mourn for her, since no one buys their cargo anymore,

The only reason why the merchants are upset is because nobody buys, no business. And lastly, what about a ship owners?

19...“Alas, alas, for the great city where all who had ships at sea grew rich by her wealth!

They are all actually lamenting simply because of the transactional nature of their relationships. They are weeping for themselves. They never had any real love for the prostitute.

We can be seduced by power. If you look at one of the greatest blights on history of Christianity is the crusades where organized governments apparently led by religion, Christianity send people to fight for the city of Jerusalem and caused so much pain. We can be seduced by power. Look at the Church of England for example, the only reason why we have the church of England today is because Henry the VIII wanted to divorce his wife, Catherine of Aragon. So you broke off with a Roman Catholic church.

This is where the church is seduced by power and enters into relationships with the beast as it were. What about in the United States, the idolatry of Christian Nationalism. They actually had a big rally because the Christian didn't want to accept the fact that Donald Trump had actually lost the election. And one of the big banners there in an actual march was God, Guns and Guts made America. Let's keep all three. Here you can see God, Guns and Guts. All three. So therefore we actually have a merging of religion together with society. This is a founder of Jericho March, who worked much around Washington DC. Why he did? He said.

God poked him in the side and woke him up. God said, it's not over." Then God showed him a vision of the Jericho Marches. Then God introduced him to a woman who had the same vision. None of this, you understand, can be questioned. It's revealed.

So here we have got kind of spiritism where you actually receive a vision and so therefore it must be true. And you actually look at the pictures of the great attack upon capital. Look, Jesus Saves. Christians actually causing an insurrection all over the place. You've got Christian involved in this massive insurrection and here you actually have Christians falling into temptation. The external source is Satan. He provides the deception. The election was stolen. Internal desires. Well, we as white people are going to benefit, we actually storm the capitalism. And finally we have pastas actually speaking out against this kind of seduction. Pastor Rick Warren,

Armed breaching the capital security behind the confederates flag is anarchy, unAmerican, criminal treason and domestic terrorism. President Trump must clearly tell his supporters "We lost. Go home now".

See the spell is finally broken. This is Al Mohler, president of the Southern Baptist seminary of which we are part of the denomination. He actually voted for Trump in 2020, and he actually came out and said,

"Conservatives do not believe there is any excuse, whatsoever, for unleashing what amounts to a destructive rage on the nation," "Where we find ourselves in the wrong, repentance is always called for."

Because we've been seduced by power and here you've got the typical picture of a white nationalist, a contradiction in terms. He doesn't wear a mask cause God protects me, but he carries a gun for protection. What a contradiction when we are actually seduced by power. Our job is to share the gospel, not change the government. We are seduced by glory where people work in business, academia, medicine, research or literature. Why? Because they want their place in the sun. They want to have the glory and a claim of their fellowman.

It reminds me of the legend of Icarus. Isn't it? This is a Greek mythology where Icarus and his father were trapped inside a city and they wanted to escape. They actually made wings and the wings were attached to the hands, the arms with wax and as they flew out of the city into freedom, the father told Icarus, you know, you don't fly too low because if you fly too low your wings will get wet and they fall in the sea, don't fight too high because the wax will melt and then you'll fall down. But Icarus was

mesmerized by the sun. He flew higher and higher, the wax melted and he fell down and fell into the Icarian Sea. Actually named after this particular myth. And it describes how we reach for the stars, we reach for this kind of glory, for which there's no abseiling and we are burned and we fall down.

Typical example, one of the youngest self-made billionaires in the world, a lady at 30 years old, Elizabeth Holmes, founder of this company called Theranos which is worth 9 billion US dollars. At 30 years old, the world's youngest self-made billionaire, who is actually a woman and actually found what she did was commit fraud, massive, massive fraud for which is facing a jail term of 20 years in the upcoming trial. I think this year or next year. So climbing up, reach for the stars and in that climb, you do unethical things.

We are seduced by self and Babylon, the harlot is telling us, yes you can do it. You see that's contrary to the cross shaped life. We're not asking you to forgo the good things God gives, but our goal in life is to live out a self-sacrificial self-emptying love of our savior in our lives. John 17:5

I do not ask that you take them out of the world by that you keep them from the evil.

The important thing is that when God tells us to come out of them, he is saying that you keep them from the evil one. The important is not to be the seduced by the evil one. The only thing that will stop us from being seduced is sanctified them in the truth. The only thing keeps us from the devil's clutches to join the demise of the Babylon is Your word.

So let us continue to immerse ourselves so that this word will change us. God has called us out of the world to be a people whose mindset and convictions are completely different from the world, in love with God but not the world. Our choice this day, I join the world and wind up with the same plagues, the same demise, inevitable or we should be looking for the bride of Christ, dressed in linen, washed with the blood of the lamb with righteous deeds.