

# *Babylon* *Defeated*



**# 14 in a series**

## Introduction

The movie “Ocean’s Eleven” starring George Clooney and Brad Pitt tells a story of eleven loveable gangsters who attempt to rob a crooked casino operator. If you’ve seen the movie, you’ll know that Ocean’s Eleven’s success was determined by how well they were able to conceal their counterfeit activities.

Reading the book of Revelation shows a key theme in Satan’s activities is also counterfeiting. As we will see in this lesson the imagery used in describing the dragon of Revelation is a counterfeit of some of the biblical characteristics of God the Father. In addition, the imagery used in describing the beast that comes out of the sea is a counterfeit of God the Son (Rev. 13:1-10). And finally, the imagery used in describing the beast out of the land is a counterfeit of God the Holy Spirit (Rev. 13:11-18). So, in essence, Satan and his agencies attempt to counterfeit the Trinity of God in three persons: Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

We shouldn’t be surprised - as this “counterfeit strategy” has been part of Satan’s ploys ever since his rebellion against God began. The Apostle Paul exposes the evil one’s cover in the following text: *“For Satan himself transforms himself into an angel of light. Therefore, it is no great thing if his evil angels also transform themselves into ministers of righteousness, whose end will be according to their works.”* (2 Corinthians 11:14-15). These satanic deceptions appear to be identical with God’s truth but have subtle differences cleverly twisted to make the counterfeit appear genuine. To be unaware of these errors will lead the deceived in a path of gross error. Obedience to God is reversed to make disobedience a desired way to live.

In the movie ‘Ocean’s Eleven’ the gangsters walk away richer. This result is the opposite to the story of Revelation where those following Satan’s counterfeit religion suffer eternal loss - while those who remain faithful to biblical truth enjoy spiritual richness and eternal life.



## Overview for Session #14

1. Babylon: An “Unholy Trinity”
2. Counterfeit Themes in Revelation
3. Babylon Defeated

### 1. Babylon: An Unholy Trinity

In our last lesson we noticed how the Apostle John was greatly astonished at the sight and works of the prostitute (Revelation chapter 17). This ‘impure woman’ was symbolic of the apostate Medieval Christian Church operating through the “Dark Ages” period. The church is depicted as riding on a beast and having the popular support of both people and political powers. The combination of church and state during this time of history resulted in the persecution of Christians who desire to have the Bible as the only foundation of their faith.

As we read further in Revelation we see that there is an end-time coalition it calls “Babylon”. Revelation’s description of this Babylon is of a world-wide combination of churches and governments, along with the support of a significant portion of Earth’s inhabitants. Revelation says this coalition’s actions will be driven by Satan, and “Babylon” rise will be just before the Second Coming of Jesus Christ. Babylon is described in Revelation as a coalition of three entities first introduced to us in chapter 12:

- i. The Dragon (Satan)
- ii. The Sea Beast (The Church)
- iii. The Land Beast (Political-Economic Government)

Look at what Revelation chapter 16 says: *Then the sixth angel poured out his bowl on the great river Euphrates, and its water was dried up, so that the way of the kings from the east might be prepared. <sup>13</sup> And I saw three unclean spirits like frogs coming out of the mouth of the dragon, out of the mouth of the beast, and out of the mouth of the **false prophet**. <sup>14</sup> For they are spirits of demons, performing signs, which go out to the kings of the earth and of the whole world, to gather them to the battle of that great day of God Almighty. <sup>15</sup> “Behold, I am coming as a thief. Blessed is he who watches, and keeps his garments, lest he walk naked and they see his shame.” <sup>16</sup> And they gathered them together to the place called in Hebrew, Armageddon. (Revelation 16:12-16)*

In this section of Revelation, the Apostle John uses the imagery of ancient Babylon located on the Euphrates River (in modern-day Iraq). Using this ancient city as a symbol, the Apostle John describes evil spirits each coming out of the mouth of the Dragon, the Sea Beast and the Land Beast.

It's important to point out the "Land Beast" (of chapter 13) is now referred to as the "False Prophet". The reason for the Land Beast's alternative name of the "False Prophet" refers back to the time of God's prophet Elijah when he battled with the false prophets of Baal on Mount Carmel in Israel (see 1 Kings chapter 18). Some of the imagery used to describe the activities of the Land Beast (see Revelation 13:11-18) come from Elijah's battle with the false prophets of Baal. In addition, the place of this end-time spiritual battle in Revelation is a place called 'Armageddon' (see Rev. 16:16). Armageddon is Hebrew for "The Mountain of Megiddo" - which is Mount Carmel.

Revelation is helping us see that the end-time battle will be a spiritual battle between Christ and Satan similar to Elijah's battle on Mount Carmel in the Old Testament.

"Babylon" - Revelation's name for the end-time adversary of God's people - is made up of three components. So, when it ultimately fails to deliver on its promises to the world it divides back into its original three parts - "The seventh angel poured out his bowl into the air, and out of the temple came a loud voice from the throne, saying, "It is done!" Then there came flashes of lightning, rumblings, peals of thunder and a severe earthquake. No earthquake like it has ever occurred since mankind has been on earth, so tremendous was the quake. **The great city split into three parts, and the cities of the nations collapsed. God remembered Babylon the Great and gave her the cup filled with the wine of the fury of his wrath.**" (Revelation 16:17-19)



Question 1: What type of battle is “Armageddon”? \_\_\_\_\_

## 2. Counterfeit Themes in Revelation

We have seen how the prostitute of Revelation chapter 17 represents a worldwide union of religions that have the support of governments and people. This combination of church and government - along with the influence of Satan - is what Revelation describes as end-time “Babylon”.

For many, it is hard to imagine this type of scenario could ever happen in our world. Currently we see a disunity amongst nations and governments, and friction present in global affairs.

However, this will change instantly when Satan appears demonstrating God-like qualities. A scenario where Satan appears to the world as a “counterfeit” Christ and performs incredible miracles to substantiate his claim to be the real Jesus would lead to dramatic world-wide change.

This scenario described in Revelation is not so far-fetched when you consider Christ’s response to the Disciples when He was asked by them what would be happening on the earth just before the Second Coming: *“For false christs and false prophets will rise and show great signs and wonders to deceive, if possible, even the elect.” (Matthew 24:24)*

Here Jesus is predicting incredible miracles performed by the powers of darkness with the intent to counterfeit and deceive.

Question 2: According to Revelation do miracles only come from God? \_\_\_\_\_

Let’s look at three areas in Revelation where Satan and his agents counterfeit the biblical Holy Trinity:

### i. The Dragon is a counterfeit of God the Father

- The Father dwells in heaven and the dragon once had a place in Heaven (see Rev. 12:7-9)
- The Father has a throne and the Dragon also has a throne (Rev 13:2).
- The Father gives power, authority, and also His throne to God the Son (Jesus); and the Dragon gives power, authority, and also his throne to the Sea Beast (Rev. 13:2-4).

## ii. The Sea Beast is a counterfeit of God the Son

- Jesus acts with the authority of God the Father (Rev. 2:27 & Matthew 28:18); The Sea Beast acts with the authority of the Dragon (Rev. 13:2-4).
- Jesus came to show us what the Father is like (John 14:9); the Sea Beast looks like the Dragon (Rev. 12:3 & 13:1).
- Jesus received worship and universal authority after His resurrection (Matthew 28:18); the Sea Beast receives worship and universal authority after his deadly wound is healed (Revelation 13:3, v4, v8).
- Jesus' earthly ministry was for three and a half years (Daniel 9:27); the Sea Beast's activities last for the same symbolic period of time (Revelation 13:5).

## iii. The Land Beast Counterfeiting God the Holy Spirit

- Jesus said the Holy Spirit is another Comforter just like Him (John 14:26 & 16:14);  
The Land Beast is called "Lamb-like" (Revelation 13:11).
- The Holy Spirit directs people to worship Christ (John 16:13-14);  
The Land Beast directs people to worship the Sea Beast (Rev. 13:12, 13:15).
- The Holy Spirit performs great signs (Acts 4:30-31).  
The Land Beast also performs great signs (Revelation 13:13, & 19:20).
- The Holy Spirit brought fire down from heaven at Pentecost (Acts 2:1-4);  
The Land Beast brings fire down from heaven (Revelation 13:13).
- The Spirit of God gives life and breath (Genesis 2:7, John 3:8 & Romans 8:11);  
The Land Beast gives life and breath to the beast's image (Revelation 13:15).
- The Holy Spirit applies the Seal of God to the forehead of believers (Ephesians 1:13, & 4:30, Revelation 7:3);  
The Land Beast applies the Mark of the Beast to the hand or forehead of non-believers (Revelation 13:16).

When we see and understand Satan's counterfeit strategies we are at a significant advantage in not being deceived by him. To see someone at the end of time claiming to be Jesus Christ and performing miracles to back up their claims but lacking some essential biblical truths will allow believers to expose the reality of this "false Christ". Read again what the Apostle Paul has said in **2 Corinthians 11:14-15**. (See page 2 of these notes)

A faithful believer in Christ at the end of time will not be looking for miracles and wonders to recognise the real Jesus - for as we have seen Satan will be able to perform these miracles. Rather, our trust will be in the eternal truths found in the Holy Scriptures in order to recognise who our Saviour really is.

*Question 3: How is it an advantage for Christians to know Satan's methods and strategies?* \_\_\_\_\_

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### 3. Babylon Defeated

The judgment and fall of ancient Babylon happened very quickly. In just one night, Babylon fell into the hands of the Persian Empire (see Daniel chapter 5). In the same way Revelation describes the judgment and punishment of this symbolic city of “Babylon” as also occurring very quickly (see Revelation 18:8)

Revelation 18 can be divided into four sections:

- i. God’s judgment upon Babylon (Revelation 18:1-8)
- ii. The world mourns the fall of Babylon (Revelation 18:9-19)
- iii. God’s people celebrate the fall of Babylon (Revelation 18:20)
- iv. The predicted conclusion to Babylon’s reign is certain (Revelation 18:21-24)

Let’s look at each section individually:

#### i. God’s judgment upon Babylon (Revelation 18:1-8)

**Revelation 18:1-8** *After these things I saw another angel coming down from heaven, having great authority, and the earth was illuminated with his glory. <sup>2</sup> And he cried mightily with a loud voice, saying, “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! <sup>3</sup> For all the nations have drunk of the wine of the wrath of her fornication, the kings of the earth have committed fornication with her, and the merchants of the earth have become rich through the abundance of her luxury.”*

*<sup>4</sup> And I heard another voice from heaven saying, “Come out of her, my people, lest you share in her sins, and lest you receive of her plagues. <sup>5</sup> For her sins have reached to heaven, and God has remembered her iniquities. <sup>6</sup> Render to her just as she rendered to you, and repay her double according to her works; in the cup which she has mixed, mix double for her. <sup>7</sup> In the measure that she glorified herself and lived luxuriously, in the same measure give her torment and sorrow; for she says in her heart, ‘I sit as queen, and am no widow, and will not see sorrow.’ <sup>8</sup> Therefore her plagues will come in one day—death and mourning and famine. And she will be utterly burned with fire, for strong is the Lord God who judges her.*

*Question 4: What does the call in Revelation 18:4 to “Come out of Babylon” mean?*

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Here we see another angel with a message to give with God's great authority. This message lights up the whole world. It is similar to The Three Angels Messages of Revelation 14. Babylon is clearly aligned with Satan. The adultery committed refers to her unity with world governments and economies and the leading away from biblical truth this alliance causes.

Economic prosperity has been experienced by those involved with Babylon. Revelation 18:4 tells us of God's people who are still living in Babylon and how God tells them to come out of Babylon and live in a way more aligned with biblical truth. It's important to note that the timing of this call is before the Second Coming of Christ. This is the last call for people to make a commitment regarding obedience to God's kingdom. Those who are undecided will automatically be united with those living in rebellion to God. It would seem that fear of financial loss may be a deciding factor for some in making a wrong decision.

This message can apply to us personally right now. Some of Babylon's sins are present in the world today. God may be calling us to make a full surrender to Him and His Bible truth. To hold on to the world and spiritual error may cause some to lose the eternal reward.

## ii. **The world mourns the fall of Babylon (Revelation 18:9-19)**

**Revelation 18:9-19** <sup>9</sup> *"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, <sup>10</sup> standing at a distance for fear of her torment, saying, 'Alas, alas, that great city Babylon, that mighty city! For in one hour your judgment has come.'*

<sup>11</sup> *"And the merchants of the earth will weep and mourn over her, for no one buys their merchandise anymore: <sup>12</sup> merchandise of gold and silver, 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 most precious wood, bronze, iron, and marble; <sup>13</sup> and cinnamon and incense, fragrant oil and frankincense, wine and oil, fine flour and wheat, cattle and sheep, horses and chariots, and bodies and souls of men. <sup>14</sup> The fruit that your soul longed for has gone from you, and all the things which are rich and splendid have gone from you, and you shall find them no more at all. <sup>15</sup> The merchants of these things, who became rich by her, will stand at a distance for fear of her torment, weeping and wailing, <sup>16</sup> and saying, 'Alas, alas, that great city that was clothed in fine linen, purple, and scarlet, and adorned with gold and precious stones and pearls! <sup>17</sup> For in one hour such great riches came to nothing.' Every shipmaster, all who travel by ship, sailors, and as many as trade on the sea, stood at a distance <sup>18</sup> and cried out when they saw the smoke of her burning, saying, 'What is like this great city?'*

<sup>19</sup> *"They threw dust on their heads and cried out, weeping and wailing, and saying, 'Alas, alas, that great city, in which all who had ships on the sea became rich by her wealth! For in one hour she is made desolate.'*

Babylon crumbles quickly and the people and governments of the world mourn. But their sympathies are not so much with Babylon itself but for their own personal losses caused by her destruction.

*Question 5 : What is the significance of Babylon falling “in one hour” (Rev 18:17 & v19)?*

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### iii. God’s people celebrate the fall of Babylon (Revelation 18:20)

**Revelation 18:20** *20 “Rejoice over her, O heaven, and you holy apostles and prophets, for God has avenged you on her!”*

God’s people celebrate the fall of Babylon. It is great news to the oppressed people of God. God’s persecuted people throughout the ages have asked the same question asked in **Revelation 6:10** - *“And they cried with a loud voice, saying, “How long, O Lord, holy and true, until You judge and avenge our blood on those who dwell on the earth?”*

### iv. The predicted conclusion to Babylon’s reign is certain (Rev. 18:21-24)

**Revelation 18:21-24** *21 Then a mighty angel took up a stone like a great millstone and threw it into the sea, saying, “Thus with violence the great city Babylon shall be thrown down, and shall not be found anymore. 22 The sound of harpists, musicians, flutists, and trumpeters shall not be heard in you anymore. No craftsman of any craft shall be found in you anymore, and the sound of a millstone shall not be heard in you anymore. 23 The light of a lamp shall not shine in you anymore, and the voice of bridegroom and bride shall not be heard in you anymore. For your merchants were the great men of the earth, for by your sorcery all the nations were deceived. 24 And in her was found the blood of prophets and saints, and of all who were slain on the earth.”*

The throwing of a millstone into the sea is a reference from Jeremiah 51:59-64. It symbolizes the certainty that this judgment will happen and its result are eternal. Babylon and all she symbolizes will have no longer have any impact on God’s people for eternity

In Matthew chapter 18 Jesus warns of causing any offense to His followers. To Christ, his people are very precious to Him and He doesn't wish any harm to come to them. Notice the similarities of Jesus' warnings in Matthew 18:6 to Revelation 18:21 -

*"Whoever causes one of these little ones who believe in Me to sin, it would be better for him if a millstone were hung around his neck, and he were drowned in the depth of the sea." (Matthew 18:6)*

We are blessed to have a Saviour in Christ who loves each of us intimately and gives us this promise that suffering will one day come to an end. Jesus wishes that each one of us surrender ourselves to Him with all of our hearts - and when you do your reward in eternity will be greater than you could ever imagine.

*Question 6: Is it your choice to be one of Jesus' faithful followers? \_\_\_\_\_*

