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Revelation

Chapter 17 - Revealing that Which Allures Men

The Intoxication of the Seductress (vs. 6)

Revelation 17:6: And I saw the woman drunk with the blood of the saints, and with the blood of the witnesses of Jesus. When I saw her, I wondered greatly.

I was talking to my wife this week. Oftentimes, I talk to her about the passage that I'm going to be talking about. And I told her, "You know, I just don't want to get this wrong." I know that there are a lot of ideas and thoughts about Scripture and obviously about eschatology. It's the word of God and you just don't want to get it wrong. I know that there are many applications to the word, but I truly believe that there is only one truth. I don't believe that I have it all, so I know that there have been times that I have failed in that, and clearly, I'm going to be held accountable for that. But I take seriously the Scripture

that is before me, and I realize that it's there to teach us something. It's not there just to inform us of an event. We're reading about something in particular when we read the Book of Revelation that is to the church in specific of Asia Minor, but to the church in general. So, God is writing to us to warn us of things, to direct us of things, and in many respects to correct us from things that would so easily beset us of the world. The Bible tells us that it's easy for us to fall in love with this world. So, John, the same one who writes the Book of Revelation, says, "Don't love the world and don't love the things of the world. If you do that, then how can the love of the Father be in you? You can't have two loves. You can't serve two masters." And so, you realize that this book is to stimulate that sense of, "Even so, Lord Jesus, we want You. We don't want the things of the world. We want You to come quickly." And it should be generating that within our hearts. It's easy to get bogged down with thoughts about, "Well, what does He mean by this?" And the imagery yields itself to many different things. And it's also easy to attach many things to certain passages simply because of the world that we're living in and how easily

they match up. One comment was made in the new members class that you could see the whole Muslim thing and the Koran and how it aligned with that. And I would say you're probably right, but the monkey wrench in all of that is that Muslims weren't even a part of anything at this juncture when this was written. Muslims didn't come in for hundreds of years later. So, the point is that in many of these respects, though He may be pointing to some things in the future, He's talking to the seven churches of Asia Minor and being specific with them. There are also ideas about who or what the beast is, and we're trying to clarify what is meant by that. The name "Antichrist" is oftentimes used, which is interesting that as you go in the Book of Revelation, the word "antichrist" is not used at all. So, you'd be hard pressed to make any kind of argument that is a title of an individual within, and yet we've made whole movies about the "Antichrist". What is said about the antichrist is in 1 John, and if you want to turn there with me, you can read it with me in 1 John 2. Of course, it's in with the passage that we're talking about, "don't love the world," and how easy it is to get immersed in the things of the world.

And it tells us in verse 16,

(1 John 2:16) "For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh and the lust of the eyes and the boastful pride of life, is not from the Father, but is from the world.

(1 John 2:17) The world is passing away, and also its lusts; but the one who does the will of God lives forever.

(1 John 2:18) Children, it is the last hour; and just as you heard that antichrist is coming, even now many antichrists have appeared; from this we know that it is the last hour."

He then goes on and shares in Chapter 4, in which he states in verse 3,

(1 John 4: 3) "and every spirit that does not confess Jesus is not from God; this is the spirit of the antichrist..."

Well, obviously we have seen this permeate our society even today.

"... of which you have heard that it is coming, and now it is already in the world."

It's an interesting statement.

The point of the matter is that "antichrist" means "against Christ". And what we know ultimately is that God is going to, by His breath, slay the antichrist, but in 2 Thessalonians 2, he's not referred to as the antichrist, he's referred to as the lawless one. But as you come to Revelation 19, when you have Christ coming and He slays, who He slays are the kings of the earth. And it says, "who came against Him." So, what you have are, of course, obviously, many antichrists in the world that have come against Him. Is there a source of evil behind this? Yes, as Scripture will say, in accord with the work of Satan. And we know that to be true. But sometimes we look for individuals and we try to pin the tail, so to speak, on the one that we perceive to be the one that's going to be the "antichrist". And I would say, don't waste your time looking. Focus on the fact that the world is against God. And that's the point that really is pushed within the Book of Revelation. And it's this world that is fighting against Him, not just a particular individual. There is a spirit of evil, there's no doubt, of Satan himself, of the dragon, as is mentioned in Revelation 12. But "antichrist" is really the description of those all who are against Christ. And

certainly, there are many that are against Him. And we're going to see that as we come in.

As you come into this particular passage in Revelation 17, and we look at this one verse, it is a verse that gets John's attention. It's an event that gets John's attention. He sees this vision that has clearly given this picture of this hostile force. And it's been described to us. If you look at the very beginning, verses 1 through 5, the description is all there, of Babylon, of this harlot, and all the description that is given to us.

But in this particular verse, in verse 6, he's turned to seeing what this woman is doing. And it's at this point that the attention is drawn to her because of her actions. And it takes him back. It floors him, would be another way of putting it.

When we describe Babylon, and if you see in verse 5, "BABYLON THE GREAT, THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS," that is described within the passage, and of course, is going to be mentioned in Chapter 18 as well, and going to be the demise of Babylon the Great. What we understand and what I'm hoping that you understand is what Babylon

really stands for. And that's really what the emphasis is within the book; that Babylon itself is a symbol and kind of a metaphor of man's united effort. Because you go all the way back to the tower of Babel, right? Genesis 11. Go all the way back to the tower of Babel. And what do you have? What you have is man's united effort to build something. Now, this is basically what he's building, if you just want to understand the picture; man is building protection for himself. Man is building prosperity for himself. He's perceiving that by virtue of coming together and working together, he's going to be the source of his prosperity. Man's going to be building preeminence of himself. One of the reasons why you have high rises. People don't talk about low rises. They always talk about the high rises. And the reason is, of course, we're elevating man and his works. And the taller the building, the more powerful and the greater you are. So, man is building his preeminence and he's building pleasure for himself. It is what he longs for. Now, if you were to find an inclusive word that would be used to define all of this, the word would be "city". It's the cities, the high rises, the prominence, the prosperity. It's a symbol of pleasure for

man. It's a place that he goes. It's what man has constructed for himself. So that this word, if you look at Chapter 17 in particular, as we've been talking about Babylon, the definition is given in verse 18 about the woman who is the harlot called Babylon.

If you look in verse 18,

(Revelation 17:18) "The woman whom you saw is the great city, which reigns over the kings of the earth."

Sometimes people ask me, "How do I know whether to take it literally or if in fact it is just a metaphor or some sort of symbol?" And I say, "Well, Scripture will define within the text what it is." So, this passage is telling us that Babylon the Great, the great harlot, is a symbol for the cities of the world. That's an interesting picture. And really, as Babylon was initially built, the tower of Babel was initially built, it was an endeavor of a united effort of man to come together and he's going to build protection, prosperity, he's going to build prominence, and he's going to build pleasure for himself. And he's going to worship that. And that's the picture that we have. Now, what we also understand is, because of the city's allurements, you

build something great, hey, everybody wants to go see it, right? You start building a tower reaching heaven, I mean, you're going to draw people together. And you promise them all these things, there's going to be an allurements. And because of the alluring power, it is identified as a woman. Men aren't as good at alluring. Sorry, guys. But girls, they bat the eyes and they just have an ability to get guys to come. So, now the cities are referred to as a woman. The reason why Babylon is referred to as a harlot is because of the unfaithfulness or the infidelity from God. And so, what you have in the passage is because of the infidelity and also because of the infatuation of cities with money; remember, a harlot is someone who sells herself. So, those two ingredients are what makes the city the great harlot. So, it is that interesting picture that we're given within the passage that is revealing to us what the text is all about.

And when you think about Genesis 11, it really describes the tower of Babel as the beginning of rebellion.

You go into Isaiah 14 as it describes Babylon, and it is literally the height of arrogance. He says, "You said in your

soul, 'I will ascend to the heavens.'" And of course, that is the picture of that tower being built.

And then Isaiah 47, you understand that it's the, I always say, the consummate seductress. And if you look with me in Isaiah 47, you see that picture that is given. And once again, referred to as a woman within the passage because of that. Isaiah 47:7. Now, we know we're talking about Babylon.

(Isaiah 47:1) "Come down and sit in the dust, O virgin daughter of Babylon..."

So, we know what he's talking about.

Drop on down to verse 7.

(Isaiah 47:7) "Yet you said, 'I will be a queen forever.'..."

(Isaiah 47:8) "Now, then, hear this, you sensual one..."

So, there's that sense of allurement.

"... Who dwells securely, Who says in your heart, 'I am, and there is no one besides me. I will not sit as a widow, Nor know loss of children.'

(Isaiah 47:9) But these two things will come on you suddenly in one day: Loss of children and widowhood.

They will come on you in full measure In spite of your many sorceries..."

There's your allurements, right? Which transliterated into the New Testament is "*pharmakeia*," drugs. Interesting.

"... In spite of your many sorceries, In spite of the great power of your spells.

(Isaiah 47:10) You felt secure in your wickedness and said, 'No one sees me,' Your wisdom and your knowledge, they have deluded you..."

Isn't that a perfect picture of the cities? "We don't need God." Why? "We're so self-sufficient." By the way, this is why the church at Laodicea needs to hear this. What was the church at Laodicea saying, one of the seven churches in Asia Minor? They were saying, "Well, we have all this stuff. We don't even need anything." And He says, "Wait a minute, you've got to stay in the place where you're saying, 'I need God for everything. I'm naked, I'm blind, I'm poor.'"

"... For you have said in your heart, 'I am, and there is no one besides me.'

(Isaiah 47:11) But evil will come on you Which you will not know how to charm away..."

Of course, once again, the inference of that.

But it says this in verse 12,

(Isaiah 47:12) "Stand fast now in your spells And in your many sorceries With which you have labored from your youth; Perhaps you will be able to profit, Perhaps you may cause trembling.

(Isaiah 47:13) You are wearied with your many counsels; Let now the astrologers, Those who prophesy by the stars,

Those who predict by the new moons, Stand up and save you from what will come upon you."

But they're not going to be able to.

He goes on and talks about the fact that they had trafficked from their youth and, of course, that whole scene of using themselves to produce more money or more affluence. So, the picture is given that is so clear within the Old Testament of what this Babylon refers to.

It is with that I want you to go back and when we talk about the allurements that come from the world, there are so many things that the city does that causes us to be drawn away from God. When you think of allurements, what you have to think of is that you're the bride of Christ, but the evil one is alluring you, or evil is alluring you away from God. How is that happening? Well, the world is alluring you. What are they doing? Well, one of the things that they're doing is by sheer volume of their numbers, they're alluring you. Majority rules, right?

And just to give you a couple of passages that deal with these kinds of allurements, Jesus was warning Matthew 24, Jesus was warning His disciples, and I can't overstate this, of the majority that would be going the wrong way. Why would He be saying that? Well, the reason why He's saying that is He knows that's one of the ways that the world allures us away from the truth. "Everybody else is doing it. Everybody else is saying it. Everybody else is going that way. This is what everybody else thinks." And that's one of the most powerful forces because what it does is it plays on our need for acceptance. We have to fit

in somewhere and everybody else is doing it. So, it allures through that sense of pressure, "I need to be accepted by everyone." So, Jesus will tell them, "Look, see that no one misleads you."

If you look with me in Matthew 24,

(Matthew 24:4) "And Jesus answered and said to them, 'See to it that no one misleads you.'

(Matthew 24:5) For many will come in My name, saying, 'I am the Christ,' and will mislead many."

Now, that's going to be a theme within the passage.

And He ultimately will say to them in verse 9,

(Matthew 24:9) "Then they will deliver you to tribulation, and will kill you, and you will be hated by all nations..."

We're not just talking about a few people here. We're talking about all the nations are going to be against God's people.

And it says in verse 10,

(Matthew 24:10) "At that time many will fall away and will betray one another and hate one another."

(Matthew 24:11) Many false prophets will arise and will mislead many.

(Matthew 24:12) Because lawlessness is increased, most people's love will grow cold."

Of course, that's the power of the majority. You can get a conglomerate and you get people to gather together and people beginning to depend upon and seeing this as the source of salvation; it'll begin to allure people and people are allured into thinking the way that the world is thinking. It's very easy to do that.

The second thing that oftentimes the world does is that they work by just sheer oppression. And you see that in Luke 12. If you look with me in Luke 12, there's a warning that Jesus gives and He's telling His disciples in both cases, He's saying, "Look, don't listen to the many and don't let them allure you by virtue of the majority." Because, obviously, you and I want to be accepted. But you know something that's even more powerful than I think acceptance is self-preservation. And if your life is being threatened in some way, you can easily be dissuaded.

And that's why He says within the passage,

(Luke 12:4) "I say to you, My friends, do not be afraid of those who kill the body..."

Now, this is an interesting phrase in a day and age in which we're so, so hyped on protecting our safety and our health. It's all about safety, health, health, safety. That's not what my life's about. It's about living for the Lord. Whether we live or we die, we're the Lord's, and we should be pleasing Him in all these respects. But how easy it is, and He says, "I warn you, don't fear them, and fear the One who you should." And He emphasizes this within the passage. Well, you understand that the city is built upon this realm of getting you to be afraid. And if it can get you to be afraid, then you begin to worry about self-preservation. And it's that self-preservation that becomes the focus of your life. Acceptance, self-preservation. In some cases, it's just plain greed that the city uses to allure you. And we won't go into that particular passage, but if you were to look into 2 Peter 2, it's what false prophets use. Greed. He says, "By their greed, they exploit you." And all you have to do is wave the carrot in front of people's noses, and say, "We promise you wealth and all

these wonderful things, and you're going to have all this stuff." And before long, people are going, "Okay, I'm sold. I want that religion. I want that faith," and how easily the city itself draws people in.

Why is it that people won't come and won't put the Lord first on the first day of the week when He should be priority number one? Why is it? And what you're going to see is it's either a pleasure or a greed or something that is alluring. The city is calling them, it's alluring them, it's telling them, "You need to follow me." And so, the affluence and the greed and the avarice is that which the city uses. "You could be making money. Hey, what are you sitting here for? Why are you guys here? You could be making money. Probably double time, time and a half, for those of you who are on the hour. For those of you who aren't, you could be doing more sales or whatever." The thought is that there's no value in this. Because what the city has done is, it's given you another value. It's given you something to be addicted to. So, in many respects, what is happening is you and I become addicted to acceptance. We become addicted to self-preservation. You and I

become addicted to greed in some cases. And the city uses all those to allure us because it's all about that.

You read the Book of Galatians in particular, and you can't put that book down without realizing that this is about the influential and this is about intimidation of the influential. In other words, look, everybody wants to be recognized by the right people. This is why you go to college and you get a degree. Why? Because those people say, "You're smart." Now, up to that point, you didn't think you were. And everybody else wouldn't agree that you were. But you have a degree now, and the experts, the influential, tell you you're somebody. And because of that, you are somebody. Well, you don't want to rock the boat in that. And so, institutions and all kinds of things have come within the city and allures you, and says, "You want to be recognized?" Well, that's the addiction to us. That recognition. You just can't seem to get enough recognition. You do something else; you get a trophy. Of course, Paul realizes ultimately in Philippians 3, he says, "You know, I don't even know why I have all this stuff. It's just all garbage because none of these things that lifted

me up are of any value to God." And you and I as believers begin to realize that, but it's almost like we're detoxing because these things have come into our life, and they have allured in our life. And look, it's impressive. Affluence is impressive. And it draws on it. And we're intimidated by the influential. There's no doubt about that.

And then last but not least, the city seduces us with mysterious things. And we're going to see that. We obviously see that within the passage of the great mysterious seduction of the great harlot and things that you haven't known before, "I bet you haven't tried this." This is why you're always hearing phrases like "new and improved," and "something like you've never had before." You know, here you are sitting in your room going, "We need to try that." Now, why do you need to try that? "Because we've never tried that before." You probably have. Scripture says there's nothing new under the sun, but let's just go with it. You haven't tried that before. And it's a sense of mystery that calls us; that seduces us. It's that which is illicit sex. It's kind of a mysterious thing. It's

not legal. It's not something we should be doing. It's kind of that mysterious thing. And you tell people you can't do it, and that makes it even more mysterious. "Why? Why can't I do it?" And before long, you're just immersed in it. It's another addiction. And all these things are addictive in getting us addictive.

Well, if you look in Revelation 17, it says this,

(Revelation 17:1) "... the great harlot who sits on many waters,

(Revelation 17:2) with whom the kings of the earth committed acts of immorality, and those who dwell on the earth were made drunk with the wine..."

It was their need for acceptance, their need for self-preservation, their greed. It was their desire for recognition. It was their sense of self-gratification and self-glorification that drew them to them. But now, the city has offered all those things in some way and has allured by virtue of the things that man is weakened and has called man to itself.

The passage then goes on and makes reference to the fact that,

(Revelation 17:4) "The woman was clothed in purple and scarlet, and adorned with gold and precious stones and pearls..."

And you can just feel the, "I'm coming." You can just see the allurements of it.

Of course, if you go to Chapter 18, you'll see that description. He quotes from Isaiah as we just read in Isaiah 47:7, "I SIT as A QUEEN AND I AM NOT A WIDOW, and will never see mourning."

He actually quotes from that passage we're reading in Isaiah.

Then as you go within the passage, of course, he talks about, well, what is Babylon?

(Revelation 18:11) "And the merchants of the earth weep and mourn..."

And you begin to realize it's all about the cargoes of gold.

(Revelation 18:12) "cargoes of gold and silver and precious stones and pearls and fine linen..."

Well, that's what she was wearing, right? It's those things, money. And man finds himself selling himself. He finds himself intoxicated by the way of the world. And "intoxicated" has this interesting picture, or being drunk has this picture of, "I'm no longer in control. So, I'm just doing this." You ask most people, "Why are you working the hours that you're working? Why are you going after what you're going after? Why are you doing what you're doing?" Many people don't even know why they're doing it. Some will say, "Because I've always done it this way," or "This is what they told me to do." But some people may have a plan, but if you really nail them, they're not really sure why they do this in the scope of their whole life. They have no clear plan, but it's kind of they're mesmerized by something, they're moved by something, and it's a kind of intoxication that meets some need in their life. See, there's this lust that is coming out, lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, the boastful pride of life, that is being allured, and you start grabbing it, and before long it grabs you, and it's now in control of you. It's that picture that we see.

Now, what's interesting about this particular verse, verse 6, is what this woman was doing. And we already know who the woman is. The cities of the earth, right? Okay, just mark it, verse 18. Okay, so we know who this woman is. The cities of the earth. What takes John back is what is now happening. We know that there's an allurements by the cities, but what now are the cities doing? And he looks up and he sees this woman and she's drinking blood. She's drinking blood. She's intoxicated by blood. I mean, that's what the passage is saying.

Read it with me,

(Revelation 17:6) "And I saw the woman..."

Now, he uses "*horaō*," which means that at this juncture, his attention is drawn by virtue of something that he sees. So, the perception is coming in.

"And I saw the woman drunk..."

It's probably where we get the word "meth." "*Methyō*" is the word that is used within the passage, but it makes reference to intoxicated in such a way that this is mentally and emotionally controlling you.

And he's looking, and he goes, "This woman's drunk with the blood of the saints."

Look at the passage.

"... drunk with the blood of the saints, and with the blood of the witnesses of Jesus. When I saw her, I wondered greatly."

"*Horaō*" - "I couldn't believe it. I was dumbfounded. It was unimaginable."

There is a truth within the passage. And it's the truth that we always want to get at. Because once again, this is being written for the sole purpose of warning the churches. And what we understand, of course, there are a number of different allurements of the churches, whether it be Laodicea with the money and self-sufficiency and self-gratification, or whether it be just the recognition by, like the church of Sardis, who longs to have their name out there. But in particular, I think of the church of Thyatira, because in that particular text, there is one called Jezebel who has come into the church and has begun to allure the church through immorality and other things and through money. And as we know historically,

the unions were very powerful, and so, they were being induced to play a role in the realm of the idols and the things that are worshipped and the things that they made were all connected. I mean, you couldn't give up your job because it's your job and it's your money, but you found yourself in your job and in your money having to compromise in order to have your job. And Jezebel comes in and starts moving in that particular realm and they began to swallow it hook, line, and sinker. What the church needs to see is how dangerous that is. What you and I need to see is how horrible it is for us to be intoxicated, be drawn by our need for acceptance. I mean, we think, "Well, it's just self-preservation. I'm just trying to protect myself." You don't understand. The city's getting you drunk, and the intoxication goes beyond the fulfillment of your desire. There's actually a force that is more powerful. And here's the interesting thing about this particular passage; that which began in the cities as greed and selfish ambition has ultimately been incited and controlled all along, and here it is, by hate. This is the bizarre thing. I mean, when God says, "Don't love the world," there's a reason why He's telling us that. Because

what the world will get you to do is hate. I mean, we're drinking blood here. We're rejoicing over death. We're longing for the death of those that are righteous, of those that are doing what is right, of the innocent in many respects. But there's a rejoicing. The city is rejoicing over that. What causes the city to rejoice over that?

I mean, you read in Acts 19 of Paul going into Ephesus and they're trying to kill Paul. Now, if you read the passage, why they're trying to kill Paul, it becomes really clear, "They're messing with our business. Our business is not working. I mean, we're not going to have any business at all if he keeps preaching. We've got to kill him." And what you see is something that is very much the nature of addiction. That the nature of addiction is something that comes into somebody's life and, look, it's like any kind of sin. It becomes so powerful that you begin to hate anything that in any way blocks or hinders you from getting what you are addicted to. On the outside, you say, "Well, it's just acceptance that I want." But you know people have died and killed people for acceptance? You know people have killed people for self-preservation?

They get afraid because this person may endanger them in some way. So, the paranoia itself begins to work and they want them dead. Or how about greed? Let's see. What do they usually say in homicides? "Follow the money." They usually say something like that. Or maybe it was a crime of passion. So, you begin to understand that all these things of gratification for us, all these things that have been alluring us, have not just simply been alluring us. In fact, the whole bizarre thing in this, and I would say the unexpected element introduced in verse 6, an unforeseen twist to the hidden undisclosed danger, begins to be exposed. And that which is exposed is that the seducer is being seduced. The seductress is actually intoxicated. And this is what takes John back. And what we're going to find is, as we continue to go on in this particular chapter, is that we thought at first that the harlot was riding the beast, but we're going to find out that the beast is controlling the harlot. And that in some bizarre twist of events, this one that started off with the pressure of the majority and the oppression of the powerful and the affluent and intimidation of the influential and all these mysterious things that it uses to

allure has now become focused on hate. That's such a bizarre thought.

If you look with me in a couple of passages I want you to look at, one is found in Ephesians 4. Ephesians 4 begins to reveal just how this thing works in which it begins to take control of us. And of course, Paul warns the believers, "Look, I don't want you to have these kind of thoughts within your heart."

(Ephesians 4:17) "So this I say, and affirm together with the Lord, that you walk no longer just as the Gentiles also walk, in the futility of their mind,

(Ephesians 4:18) being darkened in their understanding, excluded from the life of God because of the ignorance that is in them, because of the hardness of their heart."

You might want to underline that.

He goes on and says this,

(Ephesians 4:19) "and they, having become callous..."

You know, the whole concept of hardness in the Greek thought as well as the callousness was a picture of a psychopath. You do know that? So that, once again, the

picture of a psychopath is somebody that can kill you and doesn't even care. Why? Well, either it's just business, or you're just getting in the way. But they become so hardened that relationships or any kind of affection have no play on anything that they do.

"and they, having become callous, have given themselves over to sensuality for the practice of every kind of impurity with greediness."

They can't stop. Why is it that God says, "Stop sinning"? Because sinning is a segue into hate and will ultimately bring death. The wages of sin is going to bring death. How does that happen? Well, you become so intoxicated by the pursuit of your own desires, whether it's protection or self-gratification, it goes the gamut, doesn't it? But whatever it is, you become intoxicated. Before long, that becomes your whole world. And before long, anybody and everybody that thinks differently than you become an enemy. Why is the world going to, at the very end, come against God's people? Why are they going to come against little Jerusalem? Why are they going to hate God? I can tell you why. Because He goes against every

addiction that would ultimately lead you to hate. Where do you think these mass killers come from? It's always out of some kind of addiction, whether it's pornographic or whether it's some drugs. There's always some kind of addiction mixed with the deaths and the murders and the hatred because those addictions harden you. They callous your heart. They cause you to say, "I don't care what's right and wrong. I'm going to do what I'm going to do." And well, what does that do?

Well, Matthew 24, just to give you the picture of that, refers to this.

(Matthew 24:11) "Many false prophets will arise and will mislead many.

(Matthew 24:12) Because lawlessness is increased..."

"Lawlessness" in the text is not you not paying your traffic ticket. The point of lawlessness is you're going against God, and you're going against His laws, which, I mean, the fundamental law is to believe in God and to love one another, and you're going against those laws.

But it says,

"Many false prophets will arise and will mislead many.

(Matthew 24:12) Because lawlessness is increased..."

What's going to happen? Your love is going to grow cold. You're going to become a psychopath. Literally, "psycho" means "cold breath," and you'll become one of them.

What's happening? Well, what you thought was just a gratification thing has now turned into a hateful thing. I mean, you look at addicts and you wonder, "How can they do that to their family? How can they do that to their friends?" Because the intoxication has taken over and has now brought them into a realm of hatred and death.

James will put it this way, if you look at me in James 1, (James 1:12) "Blessed is a man who perseveres under trial; for once he has been approved, he will receive the crown of life which the Lord has promised to those who love Him.

(James 1:13) Let no one say when he is tempted, "I am being tempted by God"; for God cannot be tempted by evil, and He Himself does not tempt anyone.

(James 1:14) But each one is tempted when he is carried away and enticed by his own lust.

(James 1:15) Then when lust has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and when sin is accomplished, it brings forth death."

We're drinking blood. Death. And it can go from suicidal to homicidal. But death becomes the predominant force. And what you're going to see in this passage is that though the cities have perceived that what they're doing is maybe self-aggrandizing and maybe self-beneficial and maybe self-helps, what they don't understand is that they're getting intoxicated and that they're falling for the lie. Which, just to kind of give you a preview of how this chapter is going to end, at the end, the beast is going to turn and kill the woman. The woman perceives that she is in control. The cities believe that they're in control of all these things. No, they've drunk the blood. And the evil has come within them and has begun to personify.

I just want to close this particular passage in the Book of Jude. If you turn with me to Jude, come to the end of the chapter, because really, when you consider the hostility

and the hatred that's in the world; in some respects, the world is trying to get you to play along with the hatred and the whole death thing as well. This is why the Church has to be focused on the love of Christ. This is why the Church has to be focused on the Gospel. Outside of that, we become allured by the world and, okay, we think initially it's just an innocuous thing; it's no big deal. But I've never known somebody that's addicted to something to be kind, generous, thoughtful, loving. I've never known that. It doesn't happen. Now, they may feign kindness to get something. I've seen that. but I've never seen a genuine love, a genuine concern, a genuine caring. And what happens is, as Scripture says, by means of hypocrisy, we begin to sear our conscience. And what happens by that is, we stop knowing how to love. I mean, look, Paul says in Romans, "Love fulfills the Law." If we're lawless, what are we doing? We're shutting ourselves off to the very thing that builds heart and conscience. So, as you come to Jude, Jude was well aware of the people that they were struggling and going through, once again, difficult times just like in James. And in this wonderful Book of Jude, he says, "We've got to fight." And I can just

hear everybody going, "Yeah, we've got to fight. We've got to fight the evil." And so, he uses this phrase, "Contend for the faith." That's fighting, as we're contending. My initial thought is, "Okay, give me a bat. Give me a gun. Let me go after him." And God says, "That's not the way we're going to win."

And if you look with me, we'll pick up in verse 17.

(Jude 1:17) "But you..."

Now, if you understand the contrast here is ungodly deeds and their ungodly way, harsh things, verse 15, ungodly sinners, grumblers, finding fault after their own lusts. Did you find yourself criticizing? Finding fault? Okay, you're getting intoxicated here. Because it's all part of the hate thing.

"But you, beloved, ought to remember the words that were spoken beforehand by the apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ,

(Jude 1:18) that they were saying to you, "In the last time there will be mockers, following after their own ungodly lusts."

(Jude 1:19) These are the ones who cause divisions, worldly-minded, devoid of the Spirit.

(Jude 1:20) But you, beloved, building yourselves up on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Spirit,

(Jude 1:21) keep yourselves in the love of God, waiting anxiously for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ to eternal life."

It's a whole different mindset.

And what John is doing throughout this Book of Revelation is he's revealing this power that is in the world, and that allures us. But he's also revealing where it goes. So, it's not just some innocuous thing that you're doing in a particular moment that, okay, it was a sin. It's something that's leading you to death, to be in love with death, to long for hatred and destruction. You're intoxicated. The city that is intoxicating you is themselves being used as a pawn of a greater evil to destroy. The reason why God doesn't want you to sin is you're destroying yourself. And this is why Hebrews tells us in Chapter 12, don't let a root of bitterness come in. Look, we're looking for a city, but it's not like the city here.

"But you, beloved, building yourselves up on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Spirit,

(Jude 1:21) keep yourselves in the love of God..."

It goes on and says,

(Jude 1:22) "And have mercy on some, who are doubting;

(Jude 1:23) save others, snatching them out of the fire..."

You and I and the church of Thyatira, the church at Laodicea, the church at Pergamum, the church of Smyrna, all the church at Ephesus, you have to realize that we can't allow the world to get in our doors. And whatever your source of intoxication is, I mean, maybe you feel the need to be accepted; maybe you feel the need for self-preservation. We can't let that come in these doors. I can't allow the spirit of self-preservation to take control of this church. I can't allow greed to take control of this church. I cannot allow the desire for recognition or any kind of seduction to come in and take control of the church. I mean, just by virtue of sometimes people standing up and singing in a way that seems performance oriented. I can't allow that to happen. Because that's man

gratifying himself and, in some way, glorifying himself and we can't give glory to man. We can't do that. Because if that door that comes in, and it's going to bring you to callousness, and that callousness is going to bring you to hate. And I've never known a sin that doesn't bring somebody to hate. I've never known one. There is not one. It'll bring death and hate. And so, John is taken back. He sees this woman and goes, "She's drinking blood of God's people." Everything and everybody that's ever stood in the way of people's addictions are God's people. That's what we do. It wakes you up, doesn't it?

Closing Prayer:

Father, we come before You today, and we ask You to show us, reveal to us these influences that are around us and how powerful they are. But Lord, we give You thanks that beyond this, You reveal to us where this all is going. And the power that wields behind these forces that allure go far deeper than simply the sin. There is a goal for death.

With your heads bowed and your eyes closed, I'm asking you to get rid of those things, or as Hebrews would say, those sins would so easily beset you. They are besetting you, but there is a kind of seed that is growing in you that is a death seed. You'll feel the detachment begin to happen as you begin focusing more on your desire and addiction than God or people. But it won't be long after that before that heart is hardened. And Hebrews calls out, and he says, "When you hear the Spirit today, don't harden your heart. He's calling you." If God is telling you to get rid of something, get rid of it. If God is telling you to change something, change that. I mean, do you see the picture? You're drinking blood.