



Life Without God
Revelation 18

Sooke Baptist Church
Sunday, September 26, 2021
9:30 am, In-person
also on Facebook and YouTube

Coffee/Question:
Describe your experience
of arriving someplace you had never been,
only to discover it was not at all as you had anticipated.



For some months, we have been studying in the last book of the Bible... that reveals not only how things will end, but how there will be a new beginning. This last book is surprisingly connected to the first.

Genesis 1-2 makes known to us how God created all that is.
Genesis 3 makes known to us how the dysfunction that we see in the world and in our life and relationships...came to be.

But when you read through Genesis 3 what Adam and Eve did seems so innocuous.

They picked a piece of fruit and ate it.



However, God's response tells us there was so much more to what they did than that.

Look at **Genesis 2:15**

Genesis 2:15

The LORD God took the man and put him in the Garden of Eden to work it and take care of it.

It was God who gave to humanity the responsibility to care for the creation... and its creatures... on his behalf.

Genesis 2:15-17

The LORD God took the man and put him in the Garden of Eden to work it and take care of it.

And the LORD God commanded the man, "You are free to eat from any tree in the garden; but you must not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, for when you eat from it you will certainly die."

As the Creator God had the right to command Adam, and Adam had the obligation and responsibility to obey God.

This was how God created the world to function.

This was the only way by which life could be lived to the fullest.

But Adam and Eve chose... to disobey God.

Their choice on behalf of us all... opened the door...



... for physical death to enter into the world and human experience, and for spiritual death to embed itself in human nature.

What is the ultimate outcome of this?

Revelation 18 describes the end-time collapse of human culture without God.

In this description, we also catch glimpses of what life after death will be like for those who enter into it without God.

Let's read through the chapter.

[Revelation 18:1-3](#)

Fallen! Fallen is Babylon the Great!

What does it mean to be fallen?

Something that is fallen... is not what it once was.

Something that is fallen... has been broken and ruined.

Remember – “Babylon the Great” is a code word.

It is not the name of a specific city, but rather a spirit.

The spirit, the ethos of Babylon first manifested itself in ancient Babel...



Genesis 11:4

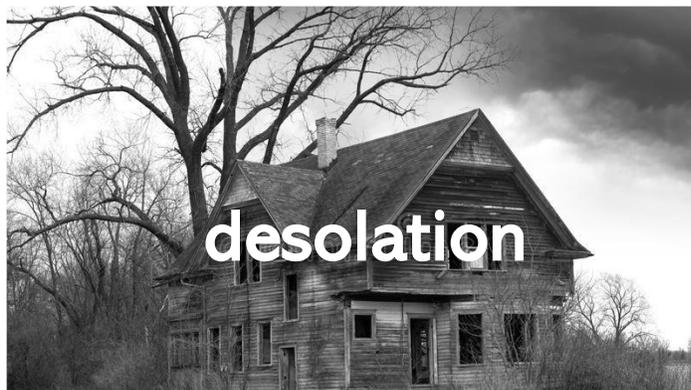
... and since that time, in many other empires and their cultures.

As we saw in Revelation 17, the spirit of Babylon... builds a way of life that excludes God and puts mankind at the center.

God says that Babylon, this way of life... will fall.

The fact that it is stated twice is meant to impress upon the reader the certainty that this will happen.

What is the glimpse which we are given of what life in eternity without God will be like?



It will be a desolation, it will be an existence haunted... by the fallen angels and everything that is impure... and it will be shared by all who reject God - "the nations," "the kings," and "the merchants of the earth."

Revelation 18:1-3

Fallen! Fallen is Babylon the Great!

Revelation 18:4-8

God has remembered her crimes...mighty is the Lord God who judges...

The message of the Bible is that we do not live in a consequence free world – neither in this life... nor in the next.

God is the Judge of the earth... v.8b... which means everyone is accountable to him.

The good news of Jesus is that in this lifetime, one can, be forgiven of their spiritual treason, for that is what sin is... by trusting in God's Savior, who died the death we deserved... in order to freely and graciously give to us the life we don't deserve.

But if God's Savior Jesus is rejected?

The glimpse we are given in verse 7... is of an existence permeated by...



... for the sin, for the wrong one did when they lived on the earth.

Revelation 18:1-3

Fallen! Fallen is Babylon the Great!

Revelation 18:4-8

God has remembered her crimes...mighty is the Lord God who judges...

Revelation 18:9

...they will weep and mourn...

Those who trust in God's Savior, the Lord Jesus are assured in Revelation 21:4a that the Father **"will wipe every tear from their eyes..."** and that at the time of the new heaven and the new earth, Revelation 21:4b... when God makes everything new....**"there will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things [will have] passed away."**

What is the glimpse we are given of what life in eternity without God will be like?



Without God... the old order will never pass away.... there will be ongoing death and mourning and crying and pain.

Revelation 18:1-3

Fallen! Fallen is Babylon the Great!

Revelation 18:4-8

God has remembered her crimes...mighty is the Lord God who judges...

Revelation 18:9

...they will weep and mourn...

Revelation 18:10

In one hour your doom has come!

What does “doom” mean?

The word describes an unexpected, unforeseen, disastrous, catastrophic event. For those who reject Jesus, his return will be the horror of horrors.

What is the glimpse we are given of what life is like for those who live without God in eternity?



Terror will be a constant companion.

Revelation 18:11-17a

All your luxury and splendor have vanished, never to be recovered... such great wealth has been brought to ruin!

Over my life I've officiated at many funerals, memorials and celebrations of life. I've observed in such times people expressing a great divergence of opinions on what they think... life is like... after death.

I've heard it described as an incredible party with one's best friends...



... or as a most awesome motorcycle ride that never ends.



But this is not the picture which the Scriptures give.

The glimpse we are given here is that life in eternity without God...



... will be a life without... a life that lacks... all the things that made life here luxurious, will be absent.

Revelation 18:11-17a

All your luxury and splendor have vanished, never to be recovered... such great wealth has been brought to ruin!

Revelation 18:17b-19

"Was there ever a city like this great city?"

The glimpse we are given here is that those who live in eternity without God...



... will experience an enduring sense of loss and regret.

But I was shocked to read that it was not for God.

Their grief is for... Babylon – for the life they once had.

Revelation 18:11-17a

All your luxury and splendor have vanished, never to be recovered... such great wealth has been brought to ruin!

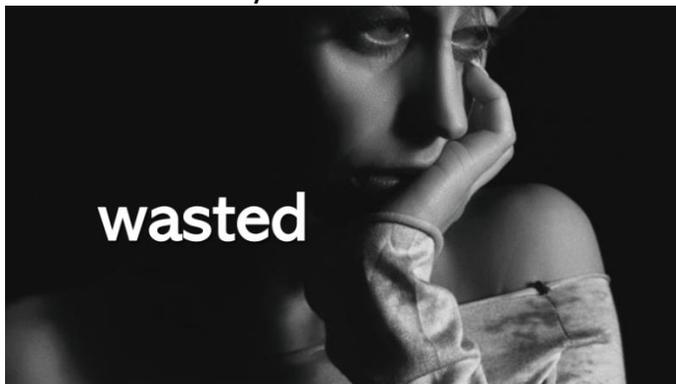
Revelation 18:17b-19

"Was there ever a city like this great city?"

Revelation 18:21

...the great city of Babylon will be thrown down, never to be found again.

All that humanity and individuals have built...without God... will become ashes.



It might have glittered; it may have seemed enduring; it may have appeared to be of great beauty... but in the end it will be revealed by God... to be rubbish.

But for the redeemed it will be different.

Look at **Revelation 21:23-24, 26**.

Revelation 21:23-24, 26

The city does not need the sun or the moon to shine on it, for the glory of God gives it light, and the Lamb is its lamp.

The nations will walk by its light, and the kings of the earth will bring their splendor into it...

The glory and honor of the nations will be brought into it.

On the day when all things are made new, the redeemed will bring to God the fruit of their life, that which they built in his name and for his glory... and it will be incorporated into the life of the ages.

Revelation 18:11-17a

All your luxury and splendor have vanished, never to be recovered... such great wealth has been brought to ruin!

Revelation 18:17b-19

"Was there ever a city like this great city?"

Revelation 18:21

...the great city of Babylon will be thrown down, never to be found again.

Revelation 18:22-24

...will never be...

What will never be?

...music... will never be heard again...

...no trade person... will ever be found again...

...the sound of food being prepared... will never be heard again...

...the light of a lamp... will never shine again...

...the voice of a bride and groom... will never be heard again...

All that makes life sweet will be absent for those who live in eternity without God.
Look again at 23b-24.



What will remain?

An enduring sense of guilt for the tragic choice made to trust in Babylon, and to participate in whatever capacity it was done... to carry out the dragon's will to harm God's people.

I see here several connections to our lives.

1. Revelation 18 is a warning.

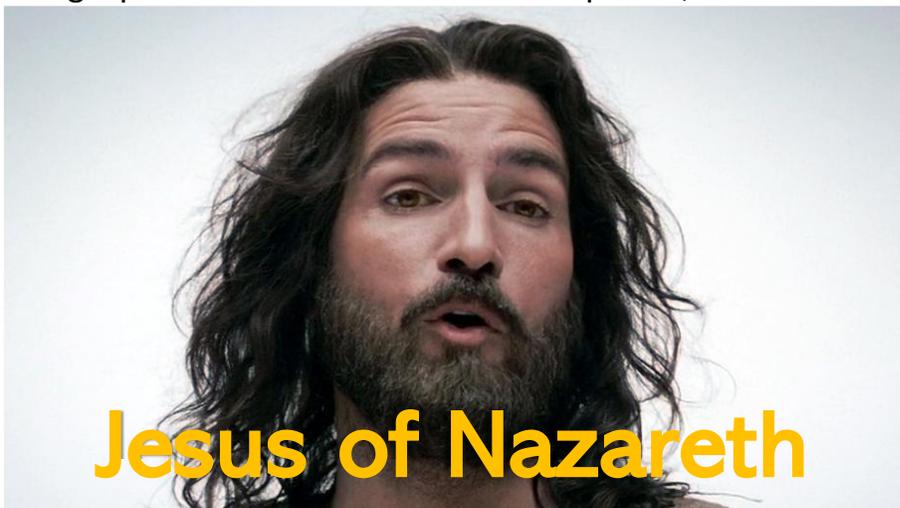


Human life and culture without God is on the highway to hell.

The book of Genesis explains why... we are like we are... and why the earth... is as it is.

The rest of the Old Testament Scripture, confirm not only humanity's great need to be rescued, but gives numerous indications of who the Rescuer would be and what he would do.

The gospels in the New Testament Scriptures, reveal the Rescuer's name...



...Jesus of Nazareth, and that in him God came into the world to save.

But God in Jesus did not save as we might have expected.

When Jesus came into the earth he did not come with the armies of heaven.

He could have, but he didn't.

Rather he came as a baby in the humblest of means.
He lived an obscure life in a small town until the age of 30.

He then tirelessly served for 3 ½ years as he announced the good news that the kingdom of God had come near.

Through his healing, Jesus made know the power of God.

Through his teaching and preaching, Jesus exposed the spiritual barrenness of religion, and extended God’s gracious welcome to any who would to come to him in simple faith.

The focus of Jesus’ life was always fixed on the cross.

He repeatedly spoke of it and he relentlessly moved towards it.

When he was wrongfully arrested, he did not fight back.

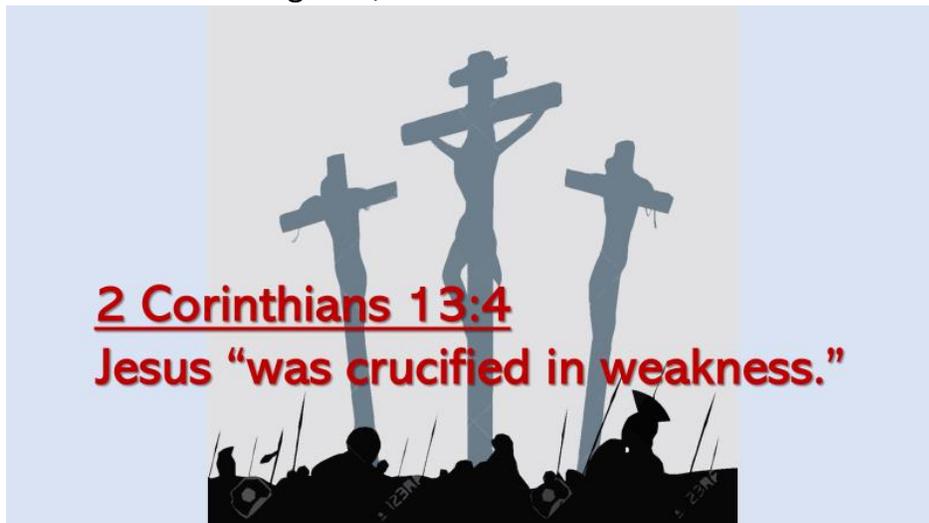
When he was falsely accused of treason, he made no defense.

When Pilate condemned him to die by crucifixion, he did not rage against the injustice which was inflicted upon him.

When the nails were driven into his hands, he did not struggle nor fight the Roman soldiers whose responsibility it was... to put him to death.

When he hung naked on a cross and was mocked by those who had come to watch, he did not speak curses upon them, but rather he asked the Father... to forgive them.

On a hill called Golgotha, in the words of 2 Corinthians 13:4...



On the cross Jesus paid humanity's sin debt... in full.
There he died the death we deserve.
On the cross, Jesus was abandoned by the Father.

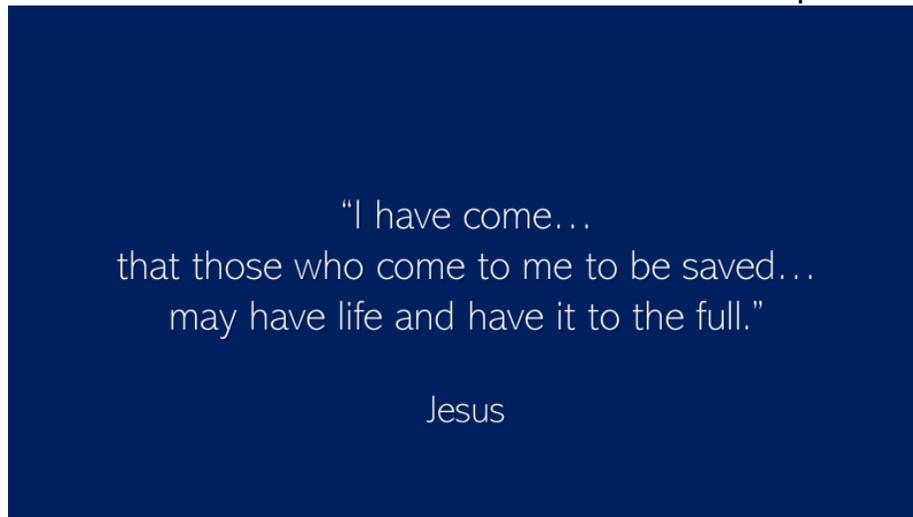
The utter darkness of that separation caused him to cry out in agony.
But he did not ask the Father to rescue him, rather he completely consumed on
our behalf the bitter consequence of life without God.

Why did he do this?

He did so in order that any and all who would come home to God through faith in
him, would not have to experience the just wrath of God for their sin, nor live in
eternity without him.

In John 10 Jesus spoke of this divine exchange.

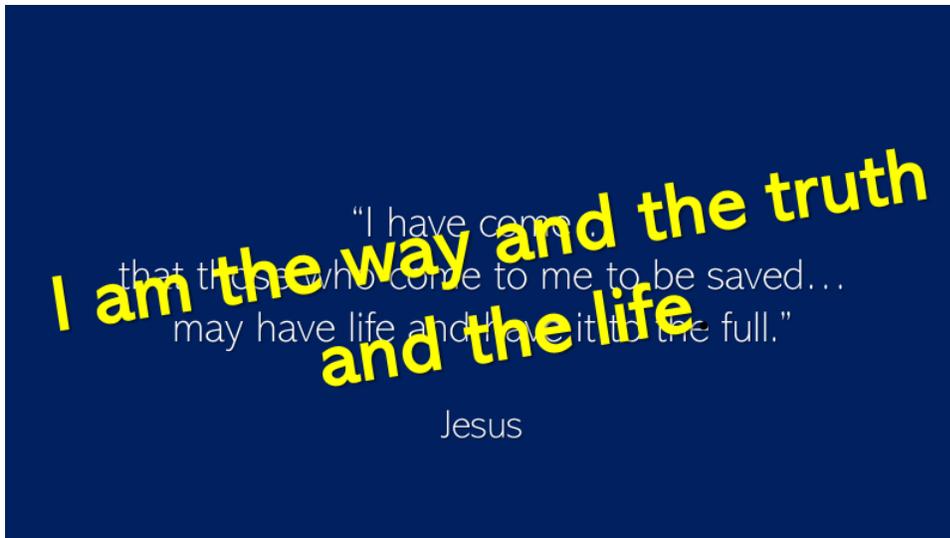
In a conversation with some religious leaders, Jesus described sin... and death...
and the devil... saying they were like a thief... that stole, killed and destroyed.
In contrast Jesus stated what he had come to accomplish.



Revelation 18 tells the truth of where life without God is headed.
And so does Jesus.

Through faith in him, a person's destiny can be changed.

Jesus is....



Do you know him?

Have you received him into your life?

Do you sense his pull on your life to come to him... today?

Speak with me afterwards if you are ready to open your life to him.

2. As followers of Jesus, we need to be regularly reminded of what we have been saved from... and what we have been saved for.

Revelation 18:4 urges God's people to...



Reading and hearing what was said to John... about the certain outcome of life without God...is intended to motivate Jesus' followers...

1 John 2:6
Whoever claims to live in him
must walk as Jesus did.

... to live like Jesus, rather than in conformity with the spirit of Babylon.

But know this...when you and I live as Jesus lived, we will, as Hebrews 12:13 says, "live as aliens and strangers on the earth," who long, as Hebrews 12:16 says, "for a better country."

This is because through faith in Jesus Christ we have become, Philippians 3:20...



3. For the sake of Jesus' mission in which he involves his followers, we need to be reminded of the ultimate outcome of life without God, otherwise the urgency of the task Jesus gives to us... can slowly leak out of us and be replaced by lethargy.



What is our task in this present time?

It is to announce the good news of Jesus' gospel and to make disciples of all nations, to baptize them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Spirit, and to teach them to obey everything Jesus commanded.

We do so with this certain hope – Jesus is with us to the very end of the age.

We are to regularly remind ourselves that there are but two destinies when it comes to life after death.

And these destinies pivot on the person of Jesus Christ.

For those who trust in Jesus, who believe in him, who follow him, the moment of death, will be the moment we are welcomed by the triune God to live with him forever.... until the return of Jesus in his home... and following the return of Jesus in a new heaven and earth.

But what of those who reject Jesus?

What is their destiny?

As we have seen... it is to live forever without God.

It will be an existence characterized by...

Desolation
Torment
Mourning
Terror
Deprivation
Loss
Terror
Waste
Guilt

But the good news of the bible is that God is not willing that any should perish. Which means... neither should his church and his people.

This is why we spend our lives for the cause of Christ and for the rescue of the lost.

The Blessing

Ephesians 4:32

...in Christ God forgave you